

SOUTH POLE SUCCESS!

Adventurer Maria claims world record

VALE adventurer has become the first person to cycle to the South Pole from the edge of the continent in 10 days, beating all other speed records.

"Her success was down to meticulous planning, super fitness, both physically and mentally, and pure determination," said her mother, Adrienne Leijerstam.

"From the time she was 12 years old and announced she wanted to be an astronaut, Maria has always been an adventurer. We are thrilled she has made it in such good time."

Maria (35) a former management consultant,



MARIA
LEIJERSTAM.

who now runs Multisport Wales, describes Antarctica as "vicious". Her journey has not been without its problems. At one point, the sweat on the inside of her boots froze at minus 35 degrees

and each rest time she struggled to erect her tent in howling winds.

For 10 days, she heated her freeze-dried food by melting snow on a small Primus stove inside her tent.

Snow drifts, complete white-outs and crevasses marred her passage, but even so, she was able to cycle the whole distance on her three-wheeled recumbent PolarCycleTM.

A two-year planning and development programme by the White Ice Cycle team produced a unique cycle design that was then manufactured by Inspired Cycle Engineering of Cornwall.

Roald Amundsen was the first person to reach the South Pole in 1911 using two-metre long skis which made crevasse crossing easier for him.

He was five weeks ahead of a British party led by Robert Falcon Scott, as part of the Terra Nova Expedition.

Amundsen and his team returned safely to their base, and later learned that Scott and his four companions had died on their return journey.

CROWDS TURN OUT FOR BOXING DAY HUNT



ABOVE: More than 100 horses, ponies and hounds paraded down Cowbridge High Street on Boxing Day – and hundreds of spectators were there to see them off as the photo (above) by MIKE WILCOCK shows. See more pictures on page 22.

Cowbridge residents show the real Christmas spirit

A YOUNG family who have taken time out to travel the world, have offered local people a heartfelt 'thank you' for their hospitality over the Christmas period.

It was over six months ago that the Long family left their base in Port Douglas, Australia, and started travelling around

the world, cutting costs wherever possible.

Alyson and husband James, with sons Dylan and Oliver, arrived in Cowbridge because the Rev Heather Weddell had, before entering the church, been her teacher in Newport.

Mrs Long contacted The GEM to say: "We would like to say thank you to the people of Cowbridge for their incredible kindness to us

over Christmas. Heather the vicar rescued us and let us stay at Noah's Place, when we found ourselves homeless after a family drama. Her parishioners have been incredibly kind. We're so grateful.

"Somebody even gave us a turkey. We've received gifts of warm clothes for our tropical kids and a mystery family gave them a Christmas stocking, a child thought Santa might not be able to find my boys."

Alyson explained the family's life at the moment: "We travel full time, and we're at seven months on the road now. "I make money through travel writing. I'm originally from Newport, but we've lived in Australia for the last seven years before hitting the road to see the world with the kids.

"Heather was my science teacher in school, and I became a scientist, working in pathology at UHW before I left Wales to be with my Australian husband.

"Heather and I got back in touch recently through Facebook. We've had the most wonderful time in Wales.

"I'm busy promoting this area to my viewers over on the blog! (20,000 page views per month) on <http://worldtravelfamily.com>."

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CUTS: 'the blame really lies with the UK Government'

OVER the coming months and years up to the next general election, our Conservative MP will do his utmost to blame all the cuts in local services on either the local council or Welsh Government – in fact, anyone except his Tory/Lib-Dem Government at Westminster.

But it is a fact that this UK coalition Government has imposed massive spending cuts, which will have a long-term and devastating impact on council services – and the public will suffer as a result.

Read any local news-

paper anywhere in Wales, Scotland, or England, and the headlines will all be the same – cuts to bus services; cuts to youth services; cuts to elderly services; potholes not getting filled; library services put at risk; job cuts; streets not getting cleaned; massive increase in food banks to help the poor; homelessness increases; pay frozen; arts and leisure budgets slashed – council tax increases to help fill the funding gaps!

Have no doubt that the responsibility for these savage cuts lie with the Conservative and Lib-Dem MPs in Parliament.

Rob Curtis, Barry
(Labour councillor, Vale Council)

Double yellow lines mean 'No waiting!'

WITH reference to the photograph of cars parked allegedly in The Butts, published in The GEM (Thursday, December 12), the Highway Code (Revised edition 2007) is very clear – at page 115, that where there are double yellow lines on the carriageway, as here, there can be no waiting at any time on the carriageway, pavement and verge.

Roger Everest,
Pontyclun.

Praise for council

SINCE moving house six months ago, I have been surprised and, at times, embarrassed by the amount of material that I have had to put out for recycling on a Monday morning.

Without exception, everything has been taken away by the cheerful team of collectors who service our area of Rhooose. So, to them, may I say a huge 'Thank you'.

Hugh Jupp,
Rhooose.

Tinsel and turkey

FIFTY members of the ladies' section at West End Social Club, enjoyed a tinsel and turkey weekend to Morecambe.

This was followed by their Christmas party, where members received a tin of biscuits and a raffle prize.

A fantastic buffet was provided by Sheila, Gloria and Steve enter-

tained. Cheques were sent to four charities – money raised by holding raffles, table sales and auctions.

We are looking forward to celebrating our 40th anniversary in March with a luncheon, and party night.

I would like to thank the committee and members for their support and wish them a happy and healthy 2014.

Barbara Warburton
(Chairperson).

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Readers' Letters

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We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested. Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, **DON JOHN**, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7E OR email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

'Only in the UK do we cling to the idea that one language is sufficient'

Bilingualism is a sign of tolerance in modern Wales

I WAS intrigued by Eileen Bayley's recent letter in The GEM, regarding bilingual signs at Llandough Hospital.

I must confess to being saddened by her attitude and lack of empathy towards the Welsh language.

Why the language should arouse so much hatred and suspicion within Wales by certain individuals is beyond my comprehension.

I, for one, am proud of our language and heritage and see bilingual signs as a sign of our tolerance and inclusivity within a modern Wales.

Being bilingual is a gift, and I only wish I could speak another language at this present time.

There are so many advantages with regard to being bilingual – so let us look at evidence conducted around the world.

The cognitive functions are improved due to bilingualism.

M Leikin (2012) discovered that bilingualism has an additive effect on an individual's creativity by enhancing mental flexibility. This is so with regard to

mathematical problem-solving – you become smarter as your brain functionality is improved.

Colin Baker in his report 'Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism – with regard to the advantages of bilingualism in Welsh and English', noted that bilingualism promotes tolerance of other languages and cultures because "two languages gives someone a wider cultural experience, there is often a greater tolerance of differences in cultures, creeds and customs."

The majority of the world's population is able to speak more than one language. Only in the UK do we cling to the idea that one language is sufficient.

Can we, therefore, afford to be monolingual? No, I certainly don't believe so. Welsh is an indigenous language of the UK and should be further encouraged and allowed to blossom within Wales...

"But Welsh is a waste of time," I hear you decree – French, Spanish or Mandarin would be far more beneficial. Yes, I would agree with you – if you lived in the countries where those languages are spoken!

'People should pay to have forms in Welsh'

WITH reference to the GEM letter on December 12, I agree 100 per cent about Welsh road signs.

Throughout Wales, they probably cost millions which could be put to much better use in our hospitals and schools.

There is not a living Welsh

person who doesn't speak English.

Make a start with road signs and then progress to duplicated official forms.

If it is wanted in Welsh, then people should pay a fee.

What a waste for some rather petty principle.

Gerry Parsons,
Barry.

What about the Foodbanks?

IT is good for democracy that our Member of Parliament is holding public meetings to seek the views of his constituents on issues such as bus services and house building.

Can I ask when he will be holding a public meeting to discuss any of the following: his Government's turning down of

£22million of EU funding for Foodbanks; Ian Duncan Smith's refusal to hold a meeting with the Foodbank charity Trussell Trust; or his Government's refusal to publish its own report into the reasons behind the increased reliance on Foodbanks – any of which I would be glad to attend.

Bob Bowyer
(Labour party supporter).

The signs at Llandough Hospital were in both English and Welsh. If that caused you confusion, Eileen, then I suggest you don't venture outside the UK.

If you truly understood people's "need to maintain the culture of Wales", as you put it, you would not have written your letter in the first place.

With regard to the cost, well let us get things into perspective – the NHS spends over £3.5 billion on alcohol-related incidents alone in the UK.

JM Jones,
Barry.

Community group's 'thank you'

ON behalf of Friends and Neighbours, I would like to take the opportunity of thanking Barry Town Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council for their support during 2013 and also The Glamorgan GEM for all its help during the year with publicity and attending events.

Friends and Neighbours have grown immensely, and we now have a waiting list. Special thanks to Age Connect Cardiff and Vale for letting us use the Senior Health Shop in Holton Road, Barry, for our meetings.

Thanks also to Aberthaw Power Station, Renishaw, Western Power and Barry Rotary Club, who sponsored our Christmas party at Beryl Road Pioneer, which enabled us to give nearly 60 people a fantastic party.

I must thank the volunteers, Marlene, Gary, Andrea, Chris Gail, Jen, Eve, Joyce who give up their time to help with the group meetings and trips, lunches etc – without their help the group could not function.

A big thank you also to Jane Hutt AM and Alun Cairns MP, who have supported us throughout 2013 – and last, but not least, the members of Friends and Neighbours.

Gay Fified (Coordinator,
Friends and Neighbours), Barry.

SHOPPER TO THE RESCUE!

I WANTED to pass on my thanks and deepest gratitude to a lady who helped me in Holton Road, Barry outside Iceland on Saturday, December 14.

I was struggling to carry (quite a few) bags when one split and food items were all over the pavement, as many people walked past me.

I was panicking, trying to scoop them up when one lady came over and asked if I was OK and immediately helped me pick things up and get things to my car. I didn't get a chance to thank her properly, so I hope she reads this in The GEM!

Nowadays, it seems day-to-day lives are so hectic – so thank you for taking the time to stop and help me.
Mark Tuck,
Penmark.

Many thanks to the library staff

IT was by pure chance that, days before the event, I became involved in the 'What the Dickens...' concert on Wednesday, December 18, at Barry Library.

Can I please pinch a few inches of space in The GEM to say what an absolute joy it was to be part of an event that celebrated the real meaning of Christmas, right in the middle of the town's busiest shopping area.

It clearly demonstrated what a precious resource and hub of the

community the library is.

As usual, the library staff pulled out all the stops with all sorts of help and imaginative displays.

I loved the 'book angel' on the Christmas tree and the good people of Barry gave generously to two charities, Breast Cancer UK and the British Heart Foundation.

I hope all those good folk who were there enjoyed the performance as much as I enjoyed making my small contribution.

David Alexander
Barry

The problem is free parking!

PART of the car parking problem in Cowbridge arises from the fact that the Town Hall car park is free – so there is no incentive for people to limit the time vehicles are left there.

Every time I visit Cowbridge during the daytime, there is the usual ritual of touring around the car park, hoping to find a place or spot someone about to depart; I am sure readers will recognise this.

I am convinced that a number of cars are parked there semi-permanently (some, it seems, under Statutory Off Road Notifications (SORN)), which obviously restricts the available spaces even more.

Could I suggest that a charge is introduced between the hours of 9am–5 pm, Monday to Saturday, along the lines of: first two hours free; next two hours at £1 per hour; a further two hours at £2.50 per hour; and the last two hours at £5. per hour?

Such a graduated fee would penalise long-stay parkers – but could, hopefully, provide more opportunity for shoppers and visitors to find short-term parking.

Steve Monaghan,
Creigiau

HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL JANUARY 8)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
	AM	M	PM	M
02 Thur	06.36	9.8	18.54	9.7
03 Fri	07.24	9.9	19.48	9.9
04 Sat	08.12	9.9	20.29	9.7
05 Sun	08.59	9.7	21.21	9.5
06 Mon	09.39	9.4	22.03	9.1
07 Tues	10.33	8.9	22.53	8.6
08 Wed	11.27	8.5	23.49	8.2

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

'Move the homes plan to Llandow'

ARE the citizens of Cowbridge aware of the future planned for their town by the Vale of Glamorgan Council's LDP?

It is proposed that 390 houses are built on a site at Darren Farm and 130 houses along the St Athan road.

Should these developments go ahead, the population of our town will increase by approximately 1,600 to 2,000 souls, depending on the fecundity of the newcomers.

Even on the basis of the lower figure, such a dramatic rise in the population of this ancient and unique market town of 4,000 inhabitants will result in unsustainable pressures.

These pressures will be felt in every aspect of town life, pressures which it is ill-prepared

READER'S VIEWPOINT

to resist. Social, educational, medical and drainage services can just about cope at present, although it should be noted that surface water run-off from the Darren Farm area has twice in recent years caused flooding in Westgate.

Will all these services be able to deal with such huge new demands? Visible for all to see is the present traffic and parking situation in the town. Off-street parking is largely occupied all day by those working in the town or travelling onwards by other means to places such as Cardiff or Bridgend.

Congestion in the town centre has resulted in the arrival of CEOs who, in applying the law, can only have the effect of dissuading

people from shopping in the High Street, where even the limited number of available spaces was reduced by the unnecessary moving of the bus stop against the wishes of townspeople.

The 520 additional households from the new outlying developments will, of necessity, be using their vehicles to do the shopping.

Should they do it in Cowbridge, the resulting gridlock is unimaginable. National policy is to limit development on greenfield sites wherever possible.

The proposals for Cowbridge are contrary to this policy. It is the green belt around the town which allows it to blend into the agricultural setting of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Why not locate these developments on a brownfield site such as the Llandow Airfield?

In 2003, an inspector's report commissioned by the Welsh Government rejected a similar proposal for Darren Farm.

Taxpayers' money should not be wasted in an attempt to get a different result.

I hope that some of those reading this have, like me, submitted their objections to the council.

EDGAR LLOYD,
Cowbridge.



Iolo pupils are going green

YSGOL Iolo Morganwg school children enjoyed a bumper eco day of action recently, to help the school promote and celebrate ecological awareness.

The school has already been awarded its second green flag, and is in full swing, preparing to collect evidence for the prestigious platinum award.

Every class was involved in specific tasks, according to their age group and abilities – ranging from creating mind maps, creating Christmas eco-slogans, designing posters and cooking activities.

During the year, the Eco council promotes activities such as recycling and energy preservation. They monitor electricity

bills and organise a fair trade stall each term. Children get involved by planting vegetable beds and sowing vegetable and flower seeds.

Class teacher and Eco coordinator Sarah Tudur explained: "This has been a wonderful day

at the end of another busy term. The children are made aware of how to keep ecological issues in mind over the Christmas holidays – especially as we try to reduce electricity bills, avoid wasting food and recycle packaging materials."

Penllyn Bridge results

PENLLYN Bridge Club results for December were as follows:

December 5 (16 pairs) first: Judith & Colin Nunn 66.56%; second: Wayne Stephens & Mary Wallis 64.94%; joint third: Sally Kennedy & Jane Frampton, Marian East & Barbara Easterbrook 56.17%.

December 12 was the club's Christmas party.

December 19 (18 pairs): first: David & Marion Stephenson 64.49%; second: Joyce Hollway & Ian Duglinson 60.23%; third: Judith & Colin Nunn 57.95%. CN

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Mr Anhar Miah and his brother Asad wish all their customers and friends a Happy New Year.

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Reading wins prizes at Cowbridge library



LEFT: The literary prize-winners receive their vouchers from Cowbridge librarian, Melanie Weeks.

THE Cowbridge Library Adult Reading Challenge was to read six library books over the course of the summer holidays.

The winners were Jennifer Kennedy and Claire Hawkes, who both won £20 WHSmiths vouchers.

Participants in TeenQuest had to carry out a number of tasks – read a library book and review

it, watch a library DVD and review it and complete a quiz using the library's online resources. The TeenQuest winner was Gwydion McDarren who won a mini shuffle.

Cowbridge librarian, Melanie Weeks, said: "Everyone who took part in the Adult Reading Challenge and TeenQuest had lots of fun. Congratulations to all our winners."

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



MEMBERS of Cowbridge Allotment Society are pictured at their Christmas party which was held at the Riverview Chinese Restaurant. The AGM will be on January 10 at 7pm.

Hi-tech fun at the library

RIGHT: Adam Durrant, Brychan Thomas and his father, Ian Thomas.

A GROUP of 12 young people and adults recently attended a 'techno-camp' at Cowbridge Library, led by a team from Swansea University.

Technocamps is an exciting computer science project that provides free workshops to young people (11–19 years) in Wales on programming, robotics, game design and app development.

The participants used LEGO Mindstorms NXT, a robotics kit to make Lego robots and then programmed them to negotiate an obstacle



track. Cowbridge librarian, Melanie Weeks, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity for local children and teenagers to work with a great piece of kit and benefit from the knowledge and enthusiasm of the team from Swansea University."

'Is 20-year-old Jasmine, oldest moggy in town?



Grand old lady, Jasmine.

JASMINE came from a cat refuge in Swansea in May 1993. She was one of four kittens handed in and about to be put down when a heroic lady who worked at the refuge offered to bottle feed all four.

She kept one, and found homes for the other three.

We had two, but sadly, Jasmine's sister died about seven years ago.

Jasmine is a grand old lady of 20 and a half years, mostly asleep but enjoys a lap and her food.

I wondered if there were other even more elderly cats out there in Cowbridge to give us hope that she will carry on a bit longer?

R. Howells,
Cowbridge



Harvey Kwan.

Fire Brigade hired out in 1914...

AMONG the people who contacted me after the recent GEM article on Cowbridge's early Fire Brigade, was one who kindly sent a copy of this letter he had found.

The letter recounts how firemen pumped out water from a local lake.

Borough of Cowbridge Fire Brigade, affiliated to the NFBU, November 11 1914.

To Mr WA James, contractor, Cowbridge (of Stafford House, Westgate).

Dear Sir,
I beg to submit the account for services of firemen at Crossways in October 1914 pumping out water from the lake: Time taken from leaving the fire station and replacing engine at night 10am to 10pm.

The cost of cleaning the fire engine and polishing same is £1.0.0. The men's time is charged as per scale. Copy enclosed.

The Fire Brigade committee make no charge in these special circumstances for the use of the fire engine; neither have I as Chief Fire Officer.

Chief Officer

Engineer Brown £1.5.0.
2nd Engineer Groom £1.0.0.
Fireman WM Brown £1.0.0.
Hire of Engine ---
Cleaning and Polishing Engine £1.0.0.
Total £4.5.0.
D Tilley, CO.

BETTY ALDEN

Nativity performance was a great success

FOR two nights only just before Christmas, the Cowbridge Physic and Old Hall Gardens were transformed into something else.

People wandering through Old Hall Gardens were surprised to find shepherds and kings and a crowd of onlookers, all in good voice as the first Cowbridge 'Walking Nativity' took place.

Herod's palace was in the physic garden, with the rest of the event staged around Old Hall Gardens. An audience of 80-plus were present on the Friday night to watch Mary and Joseph's journey as they travelled to Bethlehem and sought room to stay.

Sue Freeland of Churches Together in Cowbridge said that there had been many positive comments. These included:

"Thank you all so very much for the wonderful Walking Nativity. The Old Hall gardens made a superb venue – the atmosphere was perfect.

"The Physic Garden was just made

for Herod's palace and Old Hall's facade took on a Roman look! I shall always remember first seeing the Wise Men as shadows on the old walls, and later following in the crowd as the Star led us to Bethlehem."

On Saturday, the forecast was appalling all day, with plans being made to resite the whole event on a small scale inside annex five. Barry Wickett, the director said: "We were delighted at 5.45pm that the threatened deluge held off and we made the decision to stay outside.

"We were thrilled that over 60 people came out in spite of the forecast and they all enjoyed the performance, even though we were all damp at the end."

Sue Freeland said: "Our thanks go to all the actors, narrators and musicians who worked so hard, at a busy time of year to bring this event to life.

"If anyone would like this to be repeated, we would love to hear from you by email on info@be-refreshed.com

Subsequently, the Trading Standards Department applied for an Order under Section 20 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, to take ownership of the cattle, which was granted by Cardiff Magistrates Court.

"Robert and Gwyn Bassett were each sentenced to a five-year ban preventing them from owning and keeping animals; an eight months suspended sentence for two years; a £15,000 fine and £7,500 costs.

"The brothers have six months in which to pay the fine, failing that, they face a potential 12 month custodial sentence."

Principal Trading Standards Officer, Christina Roberts-Kinsey, said "This has been a harrowing case of wilful animal neglect. "Despite the best efforts by this department to ensure compliance with animal health legislation, it was ignored by the Bassett brothers.

"The sentence illustrates the seriousness of the offences committed by the farmers. I would like to thank Hillside Animal Sanctuary for aiding us and providing a home for the herd."

Did you know you can read your GEM online?
cowbridge-today.co.uk

Loving tribute paid to Bill... A 'DEVOTED FATHER AND GRANDFATHER'

THE family of a Dinas Powys man who died in a road traffic collision on Wednesday, December 18, at Redlands Road, Penarth, have paid a loving tribute to him.

William Crocker, aged 82, who was better known as Bill, was travelling home at around 10.20pm when his car, a silver-coloured Kia Rio, was in collision with a bollard.

Mr Crocker's family said they were heart-broken at the loss of a devoted father and grandfather, who had many friends and was well known in Dinas Powys and Penarth.

His family said: "Originally from Lowestoft, Bill lived in Cardiff from the age of eight. He married Glynis in 1960 and was happily married for 50 years. The

couple settled in Dinas Powys in 1965.

"As a young man he followed his family tradition and went to sea, working on the trawlers and for a short time in the Merchant Navy.

"During his life, he had a variety of jobs. His final employment was as a school caretaker and driver at Lindens school in Penarth.

"Bill was a member of the Oddfellows Friendly Society in Cardiff. He had many interests and hobbies which included singing, travelling the world as a member of a male voice choir, gardening, cooking and being with his family.

"He was a devoted father and grandfather and leaves behind his daughters Sally and

Jayne, son Robert, sons-in-law Ben and Rupert, and five grandchildren."

Any members of the public who witnessed the collision and have not yet come forward, are asked to contact the Serious Collision Investigation Unit on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 quoting number 62130396544.

HAYDOCK HOUSE PLANS

NEWYDD Housing Association has announced plans to refurbish Haydock House in Barry.

The plans involve the conversion of offices to provide 15 apartments and retail space on the ground floor.

Paul Roberts, Newydd's chief executive, said: "Our plans for Haydock House represent the next phase of our work in Barry and if approved will supplement the recent start on site at the former Magistrates Court, where we will be providing 52 affordable

homes. We are delighted to be working in partnership with the Vale Council to improve the town centre."

The Vale Council's cabinet member for housing, building maintenance and community safety, Coun Bronwen Brooks, said:

"I am pleased that the council is again able to work in partnership with Newydd Housing Association to provide 15 new good quality affordable homes in a great location near the shops and services in Barry town centre."

Cinema returns to St Donats

WE'RE delighted to announce that the cinema is returning to St Donats Arts Centre in 2014, with matinee and evening screenings once a month in the Tythe Barn.

The cinema will offer the very latest in digital projection to

screen a carefully selected and varied programme of current and classic quality films, including Steven Spielberg's Lincoln showing on Monday, January 27 at 2pm.

Further cinema listings can be found on our website www.stdonats.com. Ticket prices are £4.50 for advance sales and £5.50 on the day.

This project has received funding through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 – 2013 which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The funding is administered by Creative Rural Communities, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Rural Regeneration initiative.



CINEMA
returns to
St Donats!
SINEMA
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More treasures come to light at Llancarfan



CELEBRATED for its extraordinary wall paintings, St Cadoc's Church, Llancarfan found new fame last Thursday, when it revealed another remarkable treasure.

A beautiful intricately carved, gilded and mysterious reredos screen has been returned to its original beauty, over the last six months, thanks to work by three specialist conservators.

On Thursday, December 5, over 160 people gathered in the church to celebrate the end of the first major phase of conservation work in St Cadoc's Church, which was the subject of a £542K Heritage Lottery Grant in 2011, and viewed the newly conserved screen for the first time.

The mystery remains as to why this early 16th century screen turned up in a village church at all. Its splendour would be more fitted to a cathedral or abbey, and research suggests it started its life elsewhere.

Was it a refugee from the dissolution of the monasteries? A discarded glory from a grand cathedral? The whim of a rich local benefactor? Detective work continues.

The certainty is that – having been delicately cleaned and returned to glory by timber conservator Hugh Harrison,



along with conservation joiner Cameron Stewart and paint conservator Liz Cheadle, this elaborate carving has been transformed.

Formerly a rather mournful and dusty backdrop, it has emerged as a magnificent treasure, resplendent in its original mediaeval colours and gilding.

Hugh Harrison commented: "This work is most innovative in design, using colouring to create the effect of a myriad candles – the work is magnificent and it is the clever design which is the notable feature."

The screen now shares pride of place with the dramatic tableaux of St George and the Dragon, and the Seven Deadly Sins, which are still being painstakingly uncovered from under their 27 layers of lime-wash, on the walls of the church.

In an evening of hos-

pitality and illumination, there were fascinating talks by the reredos screen conservators, and also by historian Madeleine Gray, and wall painting conservator Jane Rutherford. These remarkable treasures have transformed St Cadoc's into one of the most intriguing churches in Wales.

Madeleine Havard, from Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said how encouraged HLF had been by the success of the St Cadoc's project, not only for its extraordinary achievements, but as a great example of community involvement.

Pictures of the wall paintings were posted on the BBC news world wide website last wee, leading to a storm of response on Twitter – from Japan, North America, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, and Europe, expressing awe at the findings.

PENNY FELL



CLOSE UP VIEW OF COMMONS QUESTIONS



THIS group of residents (left) from St Donats and Peterston-Super-Ely, recently toured the Houses of Parliament, where they met the Vale MP, Alun Cairns, and later sat in on Prime Minister's Question Time in the Commons.

Pictured are, back row: Jane Stead, William Stead, Chris Stead. Front: Elizabeth Wills, Stephanie Wills, George Stead, Alun Cairns.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mari Lwyd

MARI LWYD will call on local hostellers the Duke of Wellington, The Vale, and later the , on the evening of Friday, January 10. The tour starts off from The Duke at 8.30pm.

Coffee and chat meeting

A coffee and chat meeting will be held at the Bush Inn, St Hilary, on January 9 at 11.30am.

Burglary suspect sought after Dinas Powys incident

POLICE in the Vale are appealing for information, following a burglary which took place at Railway Terrace in Dinas Powys.

The police say the incident occurred between 1.15pm and 2.35pm on Monday, December 23, when entry was gained via a patio door.

The burglar was disturbed and fled the scene on foot along Cardiff Road in the direction of Barry. It is believed he ran along Sunnybank Close and into a field.

He is described as being in his mid 20s, white, wearing a grey hooded top and a black hat.

Jewellery, including rings and necklaces were stolen, as well as personal documents.

Police conducted a search of the area, using search dogs and the force helicopter.

Anyone who has information about the burglary, or the stolen property, should call police on 101; or Crimestoppers, free and anonymously, on 0800 555 111, quoting reference number 62130401762.

Barry Men's Forum hears tales of the 'Filter Room'

AT the last meeting of the Barry Men's Forum before Christmas, members enjoyed mince pies, tea and coffee, before forum member

Quentin Lewis proposed a vote of thanks and presented Diane Westcott with a bouquet in thanks for her unstinting efforts in providing refreshments each and every week for the members.

The chairman then welcomed new member Derek Williams, before introducing Eileen Younghusband, a nonagenarian, who went on to recall some of the many famous people, she had met during her long and interesting life.

At school, she knew Warren Mitchell ('Alf Garnett') and – not related – George Mitchell, who became the bandleader in the Black and White Minstrel show, popular on TV in the 1960s.

In 1938, soon after leaving school, she was an au-pair in France, caring for a French minister's children, and met many famous French politicians, but it wasn't long before he

said she had to return to Britain because of the mass encampment of German troops in an adjacent demilitarised area.

In 1940, she volunteered to help feed the men who were evacuated from Dunkirk.

When serving the troops at Woking station, a friend, Renee Cavo, who had stayed with her family prior to the war, recognised her, and they renewed their friendship.

He returned to France, had a distinguished career with the

French Resistance, and helped to repatriate many British 'prisoners of war'.

The same year, she also joined the RAF and met numerous people who went on to become famous, such as Kenneth Horne and Richard Murdoch.

She was located in the 'Filter Room', the hub for the Battle of Britain, where she often met Dowding and Winston Churchill when they went to watch as the air battles were being fought.

She recommended

that forum members should visit the new Stanmore Museum which includes the famous 'Filter Room'.

She was invited for the opening, where she had chatted with Prince Charles about the work they did during the war, and chided him for not having read her book about the operations.

Next week, Gavin Davies will be talking about 'The Battle of the Somme'. New members are welcome.

For further information, telephone 02920 594881. PMW

'Recycle your festive tree' – council urges

NEXT week, on your usual recycling day, the Vale Council will take your real tree away for recycling – as encouraged by waste manage-

ment and cleansing colleagues John Oliver and Paul Everest.

The cabinet member for the environment and visible services, Coun Rob Curtis, said: "It is really

easy, all you do is remove the decorations and leave out your real tree kerbside by 7am – you don't even have to chop it up; we will take it away whole."

Trees are taken

away and shredded, before being composted and turned into a soil enhancer, which may then be used to help grow a new tree for your family in a few years' time!

Don't forget, if you miss your collection day, you may take your tree to either Barry or Llandow Household Waste Recycling Centre.

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Barry Todd, Coun

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Diary full of eventful visits to end the year for the Cowbridge Mayor!

IHAVE had some really interesting visits since I last wrote – and first up was a visit to Cardiff Bay for a presentation of awards to disability groups and their helpers.

It was inspiring to hear of the work done by volunteers to help the young people with differing disabilities, and also the firms who employ some of these youngsters on equal terms with all their other staff.

We were entertained by two dance groups that had devised their own moves to cater for their disabilities. They were really good and their enjoyment was evident.

We were also shown the plans for a new school in Penarth that is near completion. This

is to be called Ysgol Y Deri and will unite three schools; Erw Delyn and Ashgrove school and Maes Dyfan, which are schools for children with special needs.

The St Cyres Comprehensive school is to join with them. Plans for this school look very exciting and the new Headteacher was very enthusiastic about the new venture.

Since my visit, I have heard that the schools have joined to make a Christmas record, which is available from Amazon and which can be downloaded for 79p.

The words and music have been written by the pupils and performed by the Rockettes, a group in the schools.

The single is called Christmas Time. It is already in the radio charts and they are aiming for No 1 – what an achievement that would

be! My next visit was to Llancarfan Church to see the completion of phase one of a truly dramatic uncovering of 14th century wall paintings.

These were discovered when a piece of the old wall plaster fell off as the roof was being repaired. A thin red line was noticed high up on the wall.

It is wonderful that the members of the congregation decided to investigate this and called in experts. What was discovered is a real treasure.

A large picture of George and the dragon has been uncovered, together with the king, queen and princess. The seven deadly sins are there, as is a picture of a knight being pursued by death in the form of a cadaver.

This work has only been possible because of grants from the Heritage lottery, Cadw, The Waterloo Foundation and other donations.

The experts, who have worked and are still working on these walls, were there to tell us of their work. It was obvious how proud they were of what has been achieved. People have already visited from all over the world.

I recommend it to any of you who are able to go and visit the church. You will be amazed.

As if this was not enough, there is also a spectacular wooden reredos which had been written in old records as rotten wood. This has now been beautifully restored to its former glory. How lucky are we to have such treasures in our midst.

Following this was very different as I was to see the new changing rooms in the rugby

club. They have been built thanks to money from the sale of the old grammar school building, some charity money and a lot of fundraising from the club itself. The new facilities were very modern with water and lights turning on automatically.

I declined the offer to step inside but was very impressed to see them in action!

The club can now provide facilities for all the young teams coming up. There is even a special room for the ref!

It is good to see the club going from strength to strength, as so many young people have had pleasure from this club! I hope it will continue to provide more Welsh international for our town!

A choral Christmas concert at St Donats Castle was next – a delightful way to spend a lovely Sunday afternoon in the Glass room at the castle.

The programme was varied and very clever. It was enjoyed by a large group of people. We were all treated to a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie.

Monday was our annual WRVS lunch in the Town Hall. We meet every Monday to enjoy a good lunch here and anyone wishing to join us would be very welcome. Our Christmas dinner is always very special with a full Christmas meal complete with all the trimmings. Christmas crackers, wine, mince pies, Christmas cake and a visit from Father Christmas with presents.

The people who have helped us all year, such as the volunteer drivers, were invited to join us.

Whist club needs new members

THE Pendoylan whist club has been running successfully for almost one and a half years, and consists of a friendly group of people who enjoy a game of cards in the company of friends and neighbours.

It is a non-profit making club, and every penny of the subscription fee (£2) is paid back to the members each month in the form of prize money.

There is a raffle

which is optional, this helps pay for refreshments and the hall.

However, the club, like the village, is very small and we would love some new players to help increase our numbers.

New members do not have to be experts.

The drives are held on the third Thursday in every month in the school hall, Pendoylan, starting at 7.30pm.

If anyone would like more information, telephone 01446 760502, or e-Mail jholton2@sky.com.

JH

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COWBRIDGE MAYOR'S DIARY



by Coun Gwen Baty

The sad thing was that Mrs Ena Brent, who was our organiser, died just before the event. We raised a glass of wine in memory of Ena.

The dinner went so smoothly thanks to Mrs Rene Crossman, who took over the arrangements. Our thanks must also go to the school cook at Y Bont Faen who cooks our meals every week, but really excelled herself with our special Christmas dinner.

Two days later there was another excellent Christmas concert. This

time, it was in St David's Hall Cardiff, organised by the music section of Cardiff and the Vale Schools. It was a real pleasure to listen to so many young people singing and playing musical instruments. There were so many of them with great talent. I know I am always talking about young people, but I feel we must show how proud we are of them.

Before I finish, I must congratulate the Scouts, their leaders and their families for the excellent work they did on delivering the post so efficiently. Well done!

Another excellent Christmas celebration followed. This time it was the Cardiff and the Vale youth orchestra and choir. I am so glad that the music service of the two authorities stayed together as the standard is excellent.

They have travelled and been wonderfully appreciated at various venues in Europe. This time it was in the City Hall, Cardiff, a truly beautiful old building! Many of those playing were already at university and had returned for the concert.

Next day was a visit to Bridgend Police Headquarters to attend the South Wales quiz final, which had involved schools from all over south Wales. I was pleased to see Cowbridge were involved!

There were mayors present from all over south Wales and we were all amazed at the knowledge shown by the teams on various subjects including health, fire service, drugs and the law.

Many of us adults could not have done half as well and these were students only in their second year at secondary school! Cowbridge did not win, but they put up an excellent performance. I was very proud of them.

Then came a concert of carols at Holy Cross Church. This time the Air Cadets were involved. It was good to see these young people reading in front of a large group of people.

Our Town Hall pantomime Cinderella was the next day. This was a complete sell-out. Judging by the noise, the children had a really good time; the tuck

shop was kept busy and the children kept the adults in good order.

Another busy day followed. A trip to Hoddinot Hall in the Millennium Centre to hear a performance of Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony, by the Youth Orchestra, with the addition of some invited guests, as it is such a big and demanding symphony. What a treat this was!

My last function was on Christmas morning, when my consort and I visited Southwales to wish the residents a Happy Christmas. The home was beautifully decorated and all the residents were looking forward to opening presents.

It was wonderful to talk with them and have some photographs taken together. The staff were all dressed in Christmas finery and their dining room resplendent, ready for a special Christmas meal. It was an honour and a privilege to be there.

That concluded my busy Christmas functions.

Now it is time to wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous new year in 2014.

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Peace, hope and new prospects and opportunities for 2014...

THE Christmas and New Year break has provided a welcome opportunity to 'recharge the batteries' for the busy weeks ahead in 2014, with constituency and ministerial responsibilities at the forefront of my mind.

We were blessed with sunshine in Barry enjoying family walks in Porthkerry Park and over to the Island, as well as Dyffryn Gardens, with a Valeways Walk to look forward to in early January, as part of their full 2014 programme.

In walking over to the Island, I was glad to

view the year ahead in the certain knowledge that the plans to build the new Barry Island Link Road have now been confirmed, with the announcement of the £2million Welsh Government loan before Christmas.

This has been welcomed widely over the past week, with the Vale Council's agreement with the Welsh Government and Barry Waterfront Consortium confirmed, to enable the partnership to proceed with the arrangements for managing this loan.

It was great to join Coun Neil Moore, the Leader of the Vale Council, Coun Lis Burnett and Richard Keogh, on behalf of the developers, to view the site of the Link Road from the Clive Road

Assembly Notes



by Vale AM
JANE HUTT
(Minister for Finance and
Leader of the House)

Steps. The link road will run through the centre of the next stage of the Waterfront development providing a direct link to the Island from Cardiff Road.

Once completed, it will be significant benefit in terms of attracting further investment and providing better access to the Island for local residents and visitors.

AIRPORT

Further good news for the Vale came before Christmas with the announcement that Cardiff Airport and the eastern half of the St Athan airfield are included in the new Assisted Areas Map for 2014-20, which will be of great benefit to the St

Athan and Cardiff Airport Enterprise Zone. Alongside this good news for future prospects for the Vale, we heard before Christmas that Cardiff Airport had secured new routes with Cityjet, and the Vuelling offers are attracting a great deal of interest.

The works on Barry Town Station are progressing apace, with the new platform being constructed by Network Rail opening up new opportunities for increasing the frequency of the Vale line services to Bridgend.

T9 BUS

My meeting with the managing director of First Cymru Buses, Justin Davies, before Christmas enabled me to share my views about the need for the T9 to the airport to be used more flexibly.

I have suggested that there should be stops at least once an hour through the Vale on the route from Cardiff to the airport, to meet bus users' needs. I have made my views clear as part of the review of the T9 service and I am optimistic that this will result in changes.

With the Vale Council also undertak-

ing a full review of Vale bus services, including assessing the impact of the withdrawal of services by bus companies, I am supporting all those who are making their voices heard about the importance of bus travel in Barry and the Vale.

Having met with the Transport Minister and the Leader of the Council to raise these issues and concerns, I will be liaising closely with all those who can influence the future decisions about our bus services which are vital economically and socially.

One of the first ministerial commitments next week will be to meet UK Government Ministers to discuss the needs of Wales to help progress the new Wales Bill, giving greater fiscal powers to Wales and to meet the UK Infrastructure Minister to discuss shared goals and needs.

A busy year ahead, but with good opportunities and prospects if we manage our resources and responsibilities wisely. My particular focus will be on securing job opportunities for our young people and providing support for the vulnerable.

Mayor's festive elf costume boosts raffle

THE Vale of Glamorgan Mayor, Coun Margaret Wilkinson, entered into the Christmas spirit and dressed as an elf to encourage council staff to buy tickets for her Christmas raffle.

It was obviously a success as the raffle raised just over £1,677 for the Mayor's charities – Age Cymru, Dreams & Wishes and NCI at Nell's Point.

Coun Wilkinson said: "I am very grateful for all the support I've received and am delighted with the amount raised for my charities."

"My thanks to all the staff and councillors for their support and to the following companies for their generosity – Villa Napoli in Penarth; Ledley Engineering; Wilkinsons; Paul Gentile the Jewellers; Izmir Restaurant in Barry; Poundstretcher, Barry; RWE Power; Dow Corning; Waitrose; Huddarts of Cowbridge; the Cardiff & Vale Burial Ground and Unison, VoG branch."



The Mayor with Rowan Hughes at the staff carol service.

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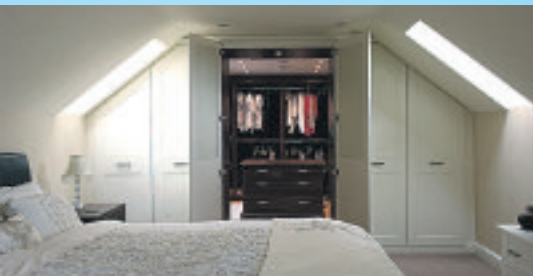
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FITTED HOME OFFICE

Mayor enjoys a festive celebration at Sunrise



THE Mayor of Barry, Coun Claire Curtis, attended a festive party at Sunrise Residential Home, during a visit on December 18.

A spokesman for the home told The GEM: "It was our Christmas party on the day and the lady mayor seemed to have enjoyed her visit.

"We were honoured that she took the time to come and meet our residents and the staff."



Coun Claire Curtis visits residents and their families during the festive season



Residents' £501 cheque for British Heart Foundation

OAPs living in a sheltered scheme run by Newydd Housing Association like to give something back, and this year organised a raffle in aid of the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

Chris Murrell of the residents' association said: "We managed to raise the fantastic amount of £501. Pictured above for the cheque presentation were Chris Murrell from Arthur Davidson Court, Kim Hooper and Lauren Campbell from BHF, and Muriel Thomas of Arthur Davidson Court, too.

"We would like to

whole-heartedly thank everyone who contributed. Special thanks to Sandra Rehman of Arthur Davidson Court who single-handedly

raised £223, but was unable to attend the presentation following a recent mini-stroke. We all wish Sandra a full and speedy recovery."

PACT meetings

CADOC PACT will now be held at Palmerston Community and Learning Centre on January 8 at 6pm.

BUTTRILLS PACT, Philip John Community Room, Barry Library on January 9 at 6.30pm.

DYFAN PACT, Buttrills Community Centre, January 12 at 7pm.

COURT PACT, Chilcott Room, Barry YMCA, Court Road on January 16 at 6pm.

Coffee and chat, The Red Fox, Penllyn, on January 8 at 11am.

Coffee and chat, Horse and Jockey pub, Wenvoe, on January 9 at 11am.

Coffee and chat, The Bush Inn, St Hilary, on January 9 at 11.30am.

STANWELL PACT, Glyndwr Hall, Glyndwr Road, on January 10 at 7pm.

ST AUGUSTINES PACT, The Windsor Arms public house on January 29 at 7pm.



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New scheme teaches skills to the homeless

Coun Bronwen Brooks watches a lesson in progress.



STAFF from the Vale Council's homeless hostel, Ty Iolo, and council contractor Ian Williams Ltd have teamed up to teach DIY skills to former and current residents of the hostel.

The four-week training course was held at Robert Price Building Merchants in Barry, and offered training in painting, wallpapering, carpentry and tiling to give tenants the confidence to undertake home improvements once they have their own home.

Lee Chappell, a previous resident of Ty Iolo, said: "The people are very friendly and patient and the course gives you a head start for when you move into your property."

Coun Bronwen Brooks, cabinet member for housing, building maintenance and community safety, who was

invited to the final course, said: "I was really pleased to come and see the volunteers passing on their skills. This project is what community spirit is all about."

Sinead O' Neill, customer service and community manager for Ian Williams, said: "We are committed to delivering the community promises that we make to our customers. Ty Iolo and its dedicated staff offer an essential service to many individuals and families who find themselves in need of temporary accommodation."

"What is special about this type of project is that there is always a tangible outcome at the end."

Ian Williams, manager of Ty Iolo, and the Vale Council are now in the process of evaluating the project and plan further sessions during 2014.

WHAT'S ON / in brief Tax help for elderly

A **TAXHELP** for Older People (TOP) income tax surgery offering **FREE** professional advice to older people on a restricted income will be held at Roz Couzens' Chiropody Surgery, Unit 4, Commercial House, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major CF61 1RB on January 6 from 10am until midday. No appointment is necessary.

To access the TOP's helpline telephone 0845 601 3321, or 01308 488066. Home visits can also be arranged via this helpline for people unable to attend the surgery.

FoE meeting

THE next meeting of Barry & Vale Friends of the Earth will be on January 7, at 7.30pm, in the Castle Hotel, Jewel Street, Barry.

Objections were sent to the Vale of Glamorgan's plan for the next 15 years – from fracking to nuclear power at Hinkley Point and housing development plans.

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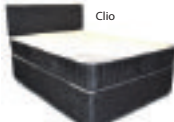
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Pupils have a busy end of term programme

CLASS 9SP held a cake break and raffle recently and raised over £80 for the Children's Cardiac Unit at the University Hospital of Wales.

They have also donated their old toys to the play room on the ward.

Pupils in years 10 – 12 visited the Clothes Show Live exhibition in Birmingham NEC. Not only did they shop till they dropped, but they also saw professional fashion shows, hair and beauty demonstrations and style makeovers.

NEWS FROM BRYN HAFREN SCHOOL

Pupils also saw former pupil, award-winning Hannah Williams show her graduate collection on the catwalk.

On December 17, pupils delivered 52 hampers to elderly residents in Barry as part of the annual Christmas hamper tradition at Bryn Hafren. The hampers were bursting with food, from everyday items to chocolate treats, and were topped with a Christmas cake made by the Food Technology

Department.

Staff at Bryn Hafren put on an extra special nativity play for pupils in years 7 to 10. The cast was led by headteacher Mr Whitcombe as Joseph, and deputy headteacher Mrs Olden as Mary.

Year-7 pupils visited the Memorial Theatre to watch the Billboard panto Jack and the Beanstalk, starring our very own Mr Coombs.

A group of year-8 pupils have been working on a special

Christmas enterprise project recently. They have designed and made a range of products in small groups over the last few weeks, and have been selling them to pupils during the last week of term to raise money. Products ranged from stockings, Christmas tree decorations and jewellery.

Year-8 pupils were lucky enough to go on a reward trip to see *Frozen* in the cinema; while year-9 pupils went to Planet Ice to go ice skating. The 5x60 regulars were rewarded with a ski trip as well.

SP



BOXING DAY RECORD FOR THE BEACH VOLUNTEERS



FRIENDS of Barry Beaches cleared and recycled a record amount of rubbish at Knap beach on Boxing Day.

The next beach clean will take place on Sunday January 26 at Porthkerry beach meeting at 3pm.

ABOVE: Volunteers celebrate their record 'clearance' at Knap beach.

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For more information, contact us on www.learnwelsh.co.uk

02920 874710, or info@learnwelsh.co.uk

EVENT: Cymraeg over a Cuppa, FREE coffee and cake.

Location: Little Blue Deli, 3 Thompson Street, Barry.

Date and time: Tuesday, January 21, from 4pm – 6pm.

Major: Wednesday, January 22, from 1pm – 3pm.

Foxy's Deli, 7 Royal Buildings, Penarth; Thursday, January 23, from 5pm – 7pm.

Learn about Welsh culture and enjoy a



free Welsh Taster course: at Castleland Community Centre, on Saturday, February 8, from 10am – 1pm.

Tedi Twt Storytime Sessions at various libraries – Saturday, January 18, from 10am – 2pm.



A brand new project for Welsh speakers is to be launched from January 2014.

Palmerston Community Learning centre, Barry will be hosting an exciting new programme of activities through the medium of Welsh. The project is to be offered by the Vale Adult and Community learning partnership.

The centre will be open from 6pm every Monday evening for visitors to enjoy coffee and snacks, use the free internet Café, meet friends old and new and play board games.

A variety of activities will be available from 7pm-9pm, including crafts and textiles workshops and a computer workshop – with the chance to improve your computer skills, use internet and email, job-search and CVs

An exciting new Welsh singing class "Canu yn Gymraeg – Sing in Welsh" will be launched under the direction of tutor Alice Jones. It is hoped that a new community choir will be formed and perhaps even perform at the 2014 Eisteddfod in Llanelli.

Other activities planned include a Welsh Book Club and a 'Brush up your Welsh' course.

Everyone is welcome to drop in and see for themselves what's on offer. The organisers are keen to meet Welsh speakers, Welsh Community groups, former pupils of Welsh schools and Welsh learners who are ready

to practice their language skills.

A warm welcome will be extended to all.

Mae menter newydd ar gyfer siaradwyr Cymraeg yn dechrau ym mis Ionawr 2014.

Bydd Canolfan Addysg Gymunedol Palmerston, y Barri, yn agor ei drysau ar gyfer rhaglen newydd o weithgareddau cyfrwng Cymraeg, a drefnir gan Barneriaeth Addysg Oedolion a Chymunedol Bro Morgannwg.

Bydd y ganolfan ar

agor o 6 tan 9pm bob nos Lun i oedolion alw i mewn am banded a sgwrs, lluniaueth ysgafn, defnyddio cyfrifiaduron am ddim, cwrrd â ffrindiau hen a newydd a chwarae gemau bwrdd.

Ceir amrywiaeth o ddosbarthiadau o 7-9pm gan gynnwys crefftiau a thecstilau, gweithdy cyfrifiaduron, defnyddio'r we, chwilio am swyddi a gwneud CV. Bwrddir cynnal clwb llyfrau a chlybiau eraill.

Arweinydd y dos-

barth Canu yn Gymraeg- Sing in Welsh fydd Alice Jones, sy'n brofiadol ac egniol, ac hoffai groesawu siaradwyr Cymraeg a dysgwyr newydd yn ogystal â chyn-aelodau cor yr eisteddfod.

Bydd dosbarth "Gwella'ch Cymraeg" yn arbennig ar gyfer cyn-ddisgyblion ysgolion Cymraeg sy'n teimlo bod eu Cymraeg yn rhyddid.

Croeso i bawb i ddod i ddysgu, cymdeithasu a chanu drwy'r Gymraeg.

Dysgu drwy'r Gymraeg

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Cardiff and Vale Community Learning Partnership
Partneriaeth Addysg Gymunedol Caerdydd a'r Fro



Canolfan Addysg Gymunedol Palmerston Palmerston Community Learning centre Bob nos Lun

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Drop in from 6.00pm for refreshments, games and Internet Café.

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- Gwella'ch Cymraeg/Brush up your Welsh
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Singers raised £230 for appeal

TWENTY members of Cowbridge Choral Society spent an evening before Christmas carol singing around the town in aid of the Noah's Ark Children's Hospital.

Over £230 was collected from customers in the Bear Hotel, The Vale Inn, The Duke of

Wellington, Bar 44, The Horse and Groom, L'Ariosto's and The Edmondson Arms.

The society would like to offer thanks and appreciation to all the establishments, and to the customers who gave so generously and joined in with the choir.

The society resumes rehearsals today (January 2) when work begins on two pieces for the spring concert, Gounod's Messe

Solennelle (St Cecilia) and Puccini's Messe di Gloria, which will be performed in March with the Pontypridd Choral Society.

New members are always welcome to join, and experience is not essential. Rehearsals take place in the United Free Church, Westgate St (opposite the Police Station) every Thursday at 7.30pm.

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Walter Mitty (alias Ben Stiller) enthralls, inspires and dazzles in beautiful film

WHILE Ben Stiller may have made

his name as a comedic star in the raucous likes of *There's Something About Mary*, the actor has a sensitive side best exemplified in his smaller work in films like *Greenberg* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*.

Stiller's worlds collide in *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, a big-budget comedy/drama directed by Stiller himself which tells the story of the titular Mitty (played by Stiller), a day-dreamer whose life is punctuated by flights of fancy.

When his job is threatened, he must track down a missing photo, a mission that becomes even more fanciful than his mental adventures and one that may very well change his life...

James Thurber's source novel has already been adapted for the big screen once in the 1947 film of the same name starring Danny Kaye, but Ben Stiller's version is faithful neither to that film, nor to the book.

The daydreaming aspect of Mitty's character is tied up in the first half hour, the raft of fantasy sequences giving way to something far more human and grounded.

This allows the real beauty of the film to shine through, the story less about a daydreamer and more about a man whose world and horizons are ever changing, inspired by his desire to do right and that age-old motivational tool – love.

While Ben Stiller has always been a good director, here he really lets loose, creating a film with a distinct visual style that looks absolutely gorgeous; whether it's the interior of the Life magazine office building, or the desolate Greenland vistas, every shot feels beautifully framed, with clever nods inserted that don't feel like a director trying to be too clever, instead nailing the tone Stiller is aiming for.

The size of the budget is clearly on show here, with the majority of the location film conveying the epic nature of the world we live in, and Stiller's ability to capture this marks him out as more than simply



by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

a comedic director.

Steven Conrad's script wisely casts the fantasy sequences out early on, using the concept as a launchpad to craft a tale of a man who spends so much time inside his own head that he finds it difficult living in the real world.

While some of Conrad's themes of self-discovery could have felt a little mawkish (and, admittedly, sometimes they do lapse into sentimentality), predominantly the feeling is of wonder and affirmation, Mitty regaining control of his life in (extreme) circumstances, but in a way many watching may wish they could emulate.

In front of the camera, Stiller is perfectly cast as the average guy in extraordinary circumstances, something he's become a little too good at in recent years, but he gives a wonderful performance as the unlikely hero, while Kristen Wiig offers a lovely foil as the woman of his affections.

Kathryn Hahn, Shirley MacLaine and Adam Scott are all superb in supporting roles, but this is a film that hangs entirely on Stiller's shoulders and the actor (and director) relishes the opportunity, in what is a wonderfully uplifting film.

VERDICT: An affirming, charming and beautiful film, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* is a wonderful piece of work, with Ben Stiller's direction hugely impressive and his performance just as strong.

Perfect for an age where people seem to prefer living life inwardly, this is the perfect antidote to that, inspiring and uplifting. *Recommended.*

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *The Life of Pi* (2012), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012).

Welsh Society's fundraising efforts help voluntary group



EVERY year, Cymdeithas Gymraeg Dinas Powys Welsh Society holds a charity fundraising evening and this year's choice of charity was especially pertinent to the village of Dinas Powys.

The Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern Ambulance/Bus is a very special service offered to the elderly of the village, and many of our members are on the rota for driving the vehicle and collecting and delivering our older residents to various venues.

The evening at the Parish Hall was a tremendous success. We were entertained in both Welsh and English by the wonderful classical group 'Fortza', who also

led the assembled guests in carol singing, which was a joy to hear.

It is with delight, therefore, that we can announce that we made a profit of £2,565 on that night and the large cheque was presented to

John Fanshaw, chairman of DPVC (above) following our Christmas service at St Peter's Church in the presence of Dr Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales on December 16.

It will be put to good

use, and enhance the lives of the less mobile members of the community.

The society wishes to thank everyone who helped to make the evening such a success.

IC

The latest Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D806.

● £2,000: 841285.

● The rollover, which now stands at £1,500 was not won this week.

● £10: 645666, 630519, 482753, 518332, 559763, 305821, 563444, 543242, 757137, 549383, 597090, 226532, 111184, 906271, 256335, 432096, 385523, 660302, 840138, 333343.

● £5: 441807, 670630, 586246, 290165, 997083, 714535, 281870, 883958, 680589, 741141, 594645,

763072, 606985, 711737, 191780, 295184, 339320, 496669, 787326, 671739, 383062, 107773, 171352, 152130, 478504, 171467, 667850, 390380, 926540, 650327, 185573, 866367, 705325, 431702, 887913, 498691, 300139, 562852, 875406, 891774, 503359, 796438, 371823, 465532, 173972, 993575, 644442, 612475, 407354, 193099, 936325, 976968, 855121, 386956, 741152, 186610, 973930.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

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Whitmore Bay swimmers brave the Boxing Day cold



ABOVE: The volunteer lifeguards at Whitmore Bay organised a Boxing Day swim, where more than 130 brave souls dashed into the icy cold waves. The annual event is fast becoming a 'must see' for Christmas spectators, and a 'must do' for anyone wanting to burn off any excess calories!

ATC Squadron celebrates with two promotions!



Flt Sgt (ATC) Kevin Gould.

JUST like a bus, you wait for one and then two come along! The end of December saw two very proud and happy men at 2117 (Kenfig Hill) Squadron RAF Air Cadets.

Wing Commander Mike Stones RAFVR (T) and Sqn Ldr Gerry Lewis RAFVR (T) of No 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets, visited the squadron to announce the promotions. The cadets were called to the parade room and addressed by Wing Commander Mike Stones.

Sgt (ATC) Kevin Gould was promoted to Flight Sergeant; he has been with Kenfig Hill Squadron since 2008 and has been one of the main organisers of the many visits and events the cadets take part in.

At present he is



Sqn Ldr Barry C Thomas RAFVR(T).

responsible for squadron discipline and drill, squadron maintenance and is in charge of the flight simulator.

The second promotion was that of Flt Lt Barry Thomas RAFVR (T) to Squadron Leader.

Commanding Officer of Kenfig Hill for just over 25 years, in the last year he has also taken on being the point of contact for the IT system, BADER, used by the wing. It is usual for a Squadron Leader to take up a post at Wing HQ, but Sqn Ldr Thomas is to remain as Officer Commanding Kenfig Hill Squadron.

Wing Commander Mike Stones congratulated both on their promotions and handed new rank tabs to both Flt Sgt Gould and Sqn Ldr Thomas.

LINDSAY THOMAS,
Secretary, Civilian Committee

Christmas party with a very special guest

THE Ty Iolo Christmas party was held at the hostel on December 20 and all the children, staff and guests were lucky enough to meet a special guest, Father Christmas.

Celebrations included a Christmas grotto, Father Christmas from Barry Round Table giving out selection boxes, Andy Griffiths from the Vale Library telling Christmas stories and bingo in the evening courtesy of Brecon Court.

Becky Lynn, a hostel



Monkeying about at the party!

worker from Vale of Glamorgan Council housing services, said: "All the children really enjoyed the party, which was only possible due to the kindness of our supporters. I would like to

say a big thank you to everyone who helped make this such a wonderful event."

The party was supported by many local organisations and businesses.

Youth Project serves up festive celebration



CADOXTON youth project served up another successful Christmas meal for local residents, funded through the dish-out-dosh project facilitated by Vale Volunteer Bureau.

The project provides money for groups that involve young volunteers in the Vale, and the three-course meal was prepared by volunteers of the Cadoxton Youth Project and also included Halal and vegetarian options.

Organiser Rita Limbrick said: "I am grateful that the dish out dosh panel helped me to run this successful event in the church for residents."

Jane Hutt AM, Minister of Finance, attended the event at Cadoxton Methodist church and presented cheques totalling £1,500 raised by Cadoxton Youth Project to: Cardiff YMCA homeless, Barry 11 Sea Scouts, Marie Curie Penarth; Ty Hafan and Cadoxton Nursery school each had £300.

Honours list is revealed

A NUMBER of notable personalities in the Vale and Bridgend areas have been recognised in the New Year Honours List for 2014.

ORDER OF THE BATH, KCB: Derek William Jones, from Penarth, CB, Permanent secretary, Welsh Government. For public service especially to economic and social conditions in Wales.

OBE: Syon Ivan Sadka, Chair, Derek Williams Trust. For services to the National Museum of Wales and to the arts in Wales, Sully.

MBE: Mrs Morfydd Conway. For services to the community in Gibbonsdown, Barry.

BEM: Maj David Davies, TD, Secretary, Mid-Glamorgan Branch, SSAFA. For voluntary service to SSAFA, Porthcawl.

Gwyn John. For voluntary services to grassroots football in Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan.

Mrs Christina Suzanne Selby. Founder, Hats4Heroes. For voluntary service to the Armed Forces in Afghanistan, Penarth.

A New Year for Hobbies, Fitness & Leisure

The New Year is a great time to make a change!

AT this time of year, you can't escape the subject of that New Year resolution.

It's a prime example of how hope springs eternal in the human spirit.

Something about the numerical change of year brings out a wave of optimism, and you are inspired to do something that you hope will change your life!

Probably the most popular resolution is to move to a healthier lifestyle, taking more

exercise and eating a healthier diet.

This is hardly surprising, as most of us are weighed down by Christmas indulgences, and the electronic scales have started flashing red for danger!

It's hard to argue with that type of resolution. It's a plan that anyone would benefit from. However, there are plenty of alternatives for that new year promise to yourself.

Why not decide to read more books during the year?

Just have one on the go all the time, and read a few pages every

day, to get into the habit again.

You could, of course, decide to take the option of joining an evening class, or getting involved in a new hobby.

We journalists on The GEM, because of the nature of our job, get to know a little bit about a lot of subjects, but one thing is very clear.

Almost any subject can be fascinating if you get the chance to go deeper into it.

There's so much out there to learn - and not just during January!

PHILIP IRWIN

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Barry - 6.00pm
Cadoxton Methodist Church
Church Road
Joanne - 01446 404897

Penarth 9.30am & 11.30am
All Saints Church Hall
Victoria Square
Tracy - 07894 275853

Penarth 5.30pm & 7.30pm
All Saints Church Hall
Victoria Square
Tracy - 07894 275853

Llantwit Major 9.30am
Catholic Church, Ham Lane East
Helen - 01446 750738

Barry 7.30pm
Gibbonsdown Community Centre
Nicky - 07703313619

Llantwit Major 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Our Lady & St Iltyd Church (Catholic)
Ham Lane East
Helen - 01446 750738

Sully - 6.30pm
The Old School South Road
Niki - 01446 740394

Barry - 10.15am
St Helen's Church Hall
Wyndham Street
Niki - 01446 740394

Dinas Powys 5.30pm & 7.30pm
The Cabin by swimming pool, Hebron Hall
Nicky - 07703313619

Barry - 5.30pm
Highlight Park Community Centre, Barry
Annmarie - 01446 736534

Dinas Powys 9.30am
The Cabin by Swimming Pool, Hebron Hall
Nicky - 07703313619

TUESDAY
Barry - 5.30pm
Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, Trinity Street
Joanne - 01446 404897

THURSDAY
Cowbridge - 9.30am
Cowbridge Rugby Club
Rob - 07708941279

Barry - 5.30pm
Highlight Park Community Centre, Barry
Annmarie - 01446 736534

MONDAY
Barry 5.30 & 7.30pm
New Jerusalem Church, Tynwydd Road, opp. library, Barry
Lorraine - 01446 407002

Rhoose 5.30 & 7.30pm
Celtic Way Community Centre, Celtic Way, Rhoose.
Teresa - 07908 077312

WEDNESDAY
Barry 4.45 & 6.45pm
St. Francis Millennium Centre, Park Road, Porth-y-Castell
Annmarie - 01446 736534



scan here or visit the website to read Alex's story

slimmingworld.ie

01 656 9696



WHAT'S ON in brief

PACT MEETINGS

BUTTRILLS PACT, Philip John Community Room, Barry Library on January 9 at 6.30pm.

DYFAN PACT, Buttrills Community Centre on January 12 at 7pm.

COURT PACT, Chilcott Room, Barry YMCA, Court Road on January 16 at 6pm.

Coffee and chat meeting will be held at The Horse and Jockey pub, Wenvoe on January 9 at 11am.

STANWELL PACT, Glyndwr Hall, Glyndwr Road on January 10 at 7pm.

ST AUGUSTINE'S PACT, The Windsor Arms public house on January 29 at 7pm.



TAKING THE WEIGHT OFF YOUR MIND...

LOCAL Slimming World consultant Helen Waite wants to help more people achieve their weight loss goals in 2014.

Helen says: "2013 was a great year for many of my members. With many, many stones being shed in the Llantwit Major groups, and many members reaching their dream target weights by eating everyday normal foods that the whole family are able to eat with you, there is never a better time to join Slimming World."

More than half of people in Wales (57 per cent) are overweight and 22 per cent have an obese BMI: 22 per cent of Welsh children aged three were overweight, just over five per cent were obese and 35 per cent are classified as overweight or obese, including 19 per cent obese.

At Slimming World all 11 to 15-year-old children are able to come free of charge with a parent member. They have their own fantastic plan and are supported on their journey.

"My children are five and seven years old and they enjoy the meals I cook, it makes it so much easier as it's just healthy food rather than 'diet' food."

"Their favourite is spaghetti bolognese or egg, beans and chips," says Helen.

"Men in Wales are more likely to be overweight than women – 62 per

cent of men are overweight or obese, compared to 53 per cent of women. We have an increasing number of male members attending Slimming World and they are more than welcome to attend."

The physical, psychological and social burdens of obesity can be significant.

There is a social stigma attached to being overweight and people who struggle with their weight often suffer low confidence and self-esteem.

Poor mobility and generally poorer quality of life are other common experiences; as are increased risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure and some types of cancer.

Slimming World can help to combat this – losing just 10 per cent of your starting body weight (known as Club 10) – can give you amazing health benefits, as well as make you feel so much better, and it increases your confidence.

If you would like to make 2014 your year, please feel free to pop along to group on a Tuesday at the Catholic Church, Ham Lane East, at either 9.30am, 5.30pm or 7.30pm – or contact Helen on 01446 750738.

***SEE ADVERT
ON OPPOSITE PAGE***

New beginners' Pilates classes

A NEW beginners' Pilates course starts at 7.15pm on Friday, January 10, at St Nicholas Hall, Barry, led by qualified Pilates teacher Sharon Sylvester, and it is small and friendly.

Pilates is a gentle form of exercise for the whole body combining strength with flexibility, suppleness and better posture.

The class is suitable for complete beginners and those with a little

experience of Pilates.

Sharon is a registered osteopath working in Barry with people with all sorts of musculoskeletal pain, from minor sports injuries and bad backs, to arthritic aches and pains.

Most classes are held at St Nicholas Hall in Barry and the 5.30pm class on Mondays is at the Millennium Centre in Barry. One-to-one Pilates sessions are also available.

To join, or for more information, contact Sharon on 07830 085606, or see www.barrypilates.co.uk.

Romilly Osteopathy & Pilates Clinic Barry Pilates Classes

Beginners - Monday 9.15am & 5.30pm,
Intermediate Mondays 9.15am
and Friday 6pm

New Beginners Pilates Course
Starts 10 January, Friday 7.15pm
St Nicholas Hall & Millennium Centre, Barry

Sharon - 07830 085606
www.barrypilates.co.uk

ALL SET FOR A FRESH (theatrical) START IN 2014!

ANITA'S Theatre School will have been established 13 years this year and has been at the Windsor Road Church from the beginning.

Due to the church being sold, unfortunately, we have to move on, which is very sad, but as they say, "as one door closes another one opens".

So from January 11, the school will be moving to the very modern newly-refurbished Castleland Community Centre, Belvedere Crescent, Barry, which is a very central location for everyone.

The school is for children aged 4 to 17 years every Saturday between 2pm – 5pm; with qualified and experienced teachers for each discipline of dance, drama and singing, for 12-week terms.

At the end of every term, family and friends can come to watch the students' final presentation of what they have learnt throughout the term.

No experience is

needed to join, just enthusiasm. The rates are very competitive and new students can qualify for a discount with the voucher.

For more information, or to secure your child's place, call Anita on 01446 730656, or 07968 701355.

And also watch out for new classes coming in the near future, jazz and street dancing classes and a class to incorporate: stage make-up, script writing, prop making, lighting/sound etc. Watch this space!

Anita's Theatre School

At Castleland Community Centre, Barry
**ACT, DANCE, SING FUN!!
£20 OFF WITH THIS ADVERT
FOR ALL NEW STUDENTS**

**NEW TERM STARTS
11TH JAN 2014
ESTABLISHED 12 YEARS**

Classes every Saturday 2pm - 5pm for ages 4-17yrs at our new central venue. We run small classes so your child has individual attention from our professional and experienced teachers, who's aim is to give each child their knowledge and most of all confidence not only at school but in every day life. Each term family and friends are invited to a presentation to see exactly what the children have learnt.

C/O 34, Station Street, Barry, CF63 4LY 01446 730656 / 07968701355

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Cowbridge Leisure Centre CF71 7DA
Llantwit Major Leisure Centre CF61 1TG
Penarth Leisure Centre CF64 2NS
Holm View Leisure Centre CF62 9DA
Colcot Sports Centre CF62 8UJ

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Lest we forget, Welsh is a British language!

IN reply to Eileen Bayley's letter on bilingual signs in The GEM, December 12, she is right to state that Wales is at present part of the United Kingdom, and I find it a shame that the Welsh signs upset her so much.

If she looks around Wales, she will find the names of thousands of Welshmen, Welsh-speaking, or not, on our Cenotaphs - who were good enough and brave enough to fight and die for the United Kingdom. Without their sacrifice, who knows what language she would be speaking now?

Many of those young men would have been Welsh speakers, and it is very sad that it is only

recently that we have been able to have Welsh signs and official bilingual forms.

When I served as a member of groundcrew at RAF Brawdy in 1984-88, there were many Welsh speakers on our shift, and I remember an incident with a pilot who shouted at me: "Stop speaking that foreign language!"

My reply was: "With due respect sir, Welsh is a British language, and if you look at the insignia that is on the front of your aircraft and every aircraft here, it reads in Welsh, *Amdiffynna'r Gorllewin, which means Defend the West*".

And off he went... There were no more complaints.

If Mrs Bayley needs a Welsh tutor to help her, I am available.

Aled Hughes, Llanilltud Fawr.

'RESPECT IS ALL WE ASK'

HOW disappointing and upsetting it was to read Eileen Bayley's letter in The GEM stating that she was "flabbergasted to encounter bilingual signing" and that "bilingual madness is taking over".

There are 584,000 Welsh speakers in Wales and many more thousands of people who wholly support the use of the Welsh language in a country that is bilingual - a country where Welsh and English have equal rights in law - not to mention the heritage our language gives us from 1,500 years of history.

I am also saddened that she takes her experience of one county in Wales as the identity of

a whole country.

Each county in Wales has different experiences, culture and heritage to offer - creating the make-up of our country.

It is a shame that Eileen hasn't been able to travel around Wales to experience the different cultures, mannerisms and dialects in our beautiful land.

Welsh is a language I love and choose to speak.

I do not ask Eileen to love the language. I do not ask her to speak the language, or even acknowledge the language - but to respect other people's decision to be able to read, speak and write the language of their choice - whether it is Welsh or English. Miss M. Williams, Llantwit Major.

Welsh Language: All in favour of linguistic diversity

THE GEM has been inundated recently with letters debating the merits and demerits of the Welsh language, and bilingual road signs.

As an Anglo-Welshman (English father; Welsh mother) and having lived here for 46 years, I am all in favour of linguistic diversity.

Furthermore, as a frequent traveller to eastern and central Europe, with many acquaintances and friends, and clients living here from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Hungary and Russia; all proficient linguists, I

have never heard any of them complain of difficulty following Welsh bilingual road signs.

In addition, while dining in Hungary and elsewhere, with Hungarian being a uniquely difficult and different language, I too, have had no difficulty navigating myself around.

As for Graham Wilson of Boverton (The GEM December 19) stating that he misses trains because of brief Welsh travel announcements, I think he needs to come back down to earth and not fantasise so ridiculously. **Christopher Short, Barry.**

Readers' Letters

IMPORTANT! We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail. **LETTERS AND EMAILS MUST INCLUDE FULL ADDRESS AND A CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER. AN EMAIL ADDRESS ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT!**

We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested. Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, **DON JOHN**, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7E OR email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

'It's not lunacy... but bilingual signs costly'

IT is certainly not lunacy to have bilingual signs in Wales; however GEM letter writer Ms Bailey is correct in highlighting the cost.

It is essential that all children in Wales learn English, otherwise their life prospects would be severely curtailed by not being able to do so. They would be limited to living and working in Wales.

It is also desirable, and legally required, that the Welsh language is kept as a living language within the Principality.

The problem is that bilingualism costs money to support. This means money that perhaps ought to be spent on providing and supporting public services, has to be spent on ensuring that both languages are available and taught throughout Wales.

Significant amounts of money could be saved if

households were asked by public bodies whether they wish to receive hard copy information in English or Welsh.

As far as I know, the UK Government does not give Wales any more money to cover the costs of bilingualism, so these additional costs have to be met at the expense of services such as health, education and welfare.

There is another issue affecting employment in Wales. When I first moved to Wales 30 years ago, the adverts for senior managers in public bodies emphasised the professional skills required to do the job and specified that knowledge of Welsh was desirable.

If you look at the adverts and job specifications today they now, largely, specify that the ability to speak Welsh is essential.

So a prime requirement for a senior management position in a public body in Wales automatically eliminates anyone who was educated anywhere else in the UK.

Is this a case of positive discrimination to further emphasise the separateness of Wales from the rest of the UK and Europe and does it guarantee high-quality leadership of major bodies?

David Kennett, Cowbridge.

Wrong to praise council spending

INOTE that the leader Neil Moore and the Vale Council have been awarded a plaque and certificate, from Diverse Excellence Cymru for the recent renovations to the council chamber, which cost taxpayers over £248,000.

This, at a time when we are seeing a massive increase in the number of Vale residents using Foodbanks.

What about the cuts

we can expect in 2014, the predicted council tax increase, and all those residents who have been hit by the 'bedroom tax' and face being evicted from their homes because they have lost benefits?

It is offensive for a body like the DEC to praise councils for spending taxpayers' money on useless projects, when so many people are struggling to live on basics day by day.

DJ Radford, Barry.

Make a resolution to help the Guide Dogs

DO you make a New Year's Resolution, only to break it within days? This year, why not set yourself a more realistic target - and help Guide Dogs into the bargain.

'Give It Up For Guide Dogs' is a campaign that encourages people to give up something they love - such as chocolate, cakes or alcohol - for the whole month of January.

You'll feel even better when friends and family sponsor your efforts, and you give the money to Guide Dogs.

There are currently more than 250 working guide dogs in Wales, many of them in Bridgend and the Vale,

and the lifetime cost for each one is estimated at just under £50,000. By Giving It Up For Guide Dogs, you can help us continue our life-changing work, bringing independence and safe mobility to many more blind and partially sighted people.

For more inspiration on what you could Give Up For Guide Dogs, and to download a sponsor form, log on to www.guidedogs.org.uk/fundraising or call 0870 600 23 23.

Alternatively, you can set up an online giving page at Just Giving - simply search for 'Give It Up For Guide Dogs' under Guide Dogs events.

JONATHAN MUDD, mobility team manager, Guide Dogs Cymru.

PENARTH AND DISTRICT RAMBLERS' ROUND-UP

Wizards, dragons and robins were our festive companions!

RAMBLERS
Festival of Winter
Walks has taken in
the festive season,
and Geraint and his
sheepdog Patch
played host on two
walks before
Christmas.

On the shortest day of 2013, seven members enjoyed a walk taking in Castell Coch, the Taff Trail and a zigzag climb up to Craig yr Allt in glorious winter sunshine.

Robins serenaded them at Caerphilly Mountain, while a herd of cows paddled in the mud looking very soulful and their return was made taking in the delights of the carved sculpture trail in Fforest Fawr, complete with wizards and dragons!

Geraint's second walk attracted the wind and rain and only two people as they trekked along the cliff top at Penarth, as what was predicted to be a leisurely simple local stroll turned into a battle against the elements.

Following the Wales Coast Path, some shelter was gained from hedges above the grey and choppy Bristol Channel and as the showers grew heavier, the trio turned inland at Lavernock Point, making their way along Fort Road to reach Cosmeston Country Park which was almost deserted.

Their return was made up the old disused Taff Vale railway track back to Penarth cliff top for a steaming cuppa before the journey home.

After Christmas on a

very breezy but dry morning, only two walkers ventured out to join Joy with dogs Bracken and Bronte at Cold Knap. Heading uphill the trio made their way along the cliff to descend through Porthkerry Bay, followed by another climb to the Bulwarks.

From Porthkerry Caravan Park, they journeyed on to turn inland at Happy Valley and from Rhose Point development, crossing the railway line and reaching Rhose village, an energetic blustery wind faced them all the way back to Porthkerry Park.

Enjoying the shelter of the woods at Lovers' Lane and emerging onto Park Road, the very blustery return to the Knap was made via Romilly Park.

Hopefully, with the advent of 2014, the weather will eventually get better so here's to some good walking in the coming year.

On January 4, meet at 9am at the Barry Waterfront for a 10-mile moderate walk in the Vale of Glamorgan, taking in Beaupre Castle; contact Rachel on 01446 410545.

On January 5, meet at 9.30am at Cogan for a six-mile easy tramp around Cardiff Bay; contact Ann on 029 2040 7319.

Programmes and membership advice can be obtained from Pam on 02920 255102.

JOY STRANGWARD

The Friends and Neighbours enjoy festive fun

FRIENDS
and
Neighbours ended
their very successful
year with their
Christmas party at
Beryl Road Pioneer
Hall, in
Barry.

The party was made possible due to sponsorship by Barry Rotary Club, Aberthaw Power Station and Renishaw. Jane Hutt AM joined over 56 members at a festive four-course lunch followed by mince pies and a glass of wine.

The tables were tastefully decorated with crackers etc as well as the room decorated with trimmings.

Entertainment was provided by Barry Male Voice Choir, who sang

carols and popular songs and the audience showed their appreciation.

Ms Hutt thanked Gay Fifield and the team for all their hard work. Alun Cairns MP later joined the party and praised the volunteers.

They were also entertained by Rev Malcolm Davies, with an amusing talk on hats he had collected from all over the world.

The group now take a break till February but are looking forward to the visit to New Theatre Pantomime to see Jack and the Beanstalk.

Further information from coordinator Gay Fifield (01446 400044).

Pupils keep busy as year ends



Llangrannog – a wonderful week, full of fun and activities.

Rotary's 'Youth speaks' event.



END OF TERM NEWS ROUND-UP FROM YSGOL GYFUN BRO MORGANNWG

Llangrannog LAST month, year-7 pupils set off on their journey west to Llangrannog. They had a week filled with fun and activities, although it's hard to say if it was the children or teachers who enjoyed it the most!

URDD swim gala ON Wednesday, December 4, a group from YGBM went to Cogan Leisure Centre, Penarth, for the URDD swimming gala.

It was a full day of competition with excellent results at the end of which we came home with a total of 12 prizes – eight firsts, one second, and three thirds.

Rotary Youth Speaks

ON Wednesday evening, December 11, the Rotary Youth Speaks public speaking competition was held at the school. Despite only teams from YGBM taking part there was still plenty of competition.

Congratulations to the

following winners:
Junior: Best speaker – Arwel Thomas. Best chair – Llinos Jones. Best vote of thanks – Twm Aled.

Senior: Best speaker – Lois Aled. Best chair – Leah Robinson. Best vote of thanks – Nia Brown.

The winning teams will now go on to the next round. Junior – Brenig Davies, Tiron Davies, Llinos Jones. Topic: Is society and the media defining our gender identities?

Senior – Lois Aled, Nia Brown, Nia Fenn. Topic: Is it time for us to stop 'horsing around'? Should we be searching for new meat alternatives in the wake of the horsemeat scandal?

BTEC visit ON Thursday, December 12, a group of year-10 boys from the BTEC SWEET course went on a trip to Llandow for a session with a driving instructor.

They had an interesting morning with Ian Wilcox of 'I Will Drive School of Motoring' who discussed all aspects of running and driving a car.

He started by discussing the costs of run-



BTEC visit.

ning a car, up to £4,000 on average in the first year between the costs of lessons, insurance and buying a car. Upon hearing this, the boys were eager to start looking for a Saturday job!

Next came a lesson on car maintenance – checking the oil, water, tyres etc and also the responsibilities of being a driver.

Last, but not least, what everyone was looking forward to the most – driving the car on the track at Llandow air strip.

B-r-r-ro Morgannwg!

AFTER school on Friday, December 13, a hardy group of over 50

staff and sixth formers braved the waters of Barry Island in aid of our chosen charity LATCH.

Thank you to Starbucks, Dunleavy Drive, for their contribution of coffee which was much appreciated!

Christmas Jumper Day ON Friday, December 13, Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg and Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Talwg both took part in the annual Save the Children 'Christmas Jumper Day'.

There was an array of jumpers sported by pupils and staff, between the two schools a total of £540 was raised, which

will be split between Save the Children and the Philippines disaster appeal.

National Children's Orchestra

IT is with great pleasure we announce that Anwen Fardy, year-9, has been selected for the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain 2014, the second year running she has been chosen.

Anwen was also successful in the recent regional Rotary Young Musician competition and will now go on to the South Wales round in March. Da iawn Anwen.

Group sees church marvels being restored

BETWEEN Christmas and New Year in 1992, St Donats Church was the scene of a crime which caught the imagination of the media, and was reported in the national press.

Three oil paintings on oak panels, forming a triptych portraying three generations of the Stradling family of St Donats Castle, with some of their history, and commissioned by the youngest of them in 1560, were stolen and a fire started. The triptych had hung in the church for hundreds of years.

Specialist police and a forensic team were quickly alerted, and the paintings were located in Cardiff under a mattress, obviously awaiting transfer. The paintings then went to the National Museum and were later on display, but were seen to deteriorate out of the very damp vestry atmosphere.

This autumn the Rector was informed that the museum had received a grant from the Pilgrim Trust to restore them, and conservator Charles Reed would be working on them two days a week, under the supervision of Adam Webster, head of the art conservation department.

Some members of St Donats' congregation were invited to see the progress, and a group were treated to a fascinating insight into the work in progress.

Charles explained that Protestant Tudor portraits were intended to show power and stability, hence the ances-

*Report: Lynda Clarke
Photos: Heather March.*



try, the coats of arms, the colours and symbols used and the inscriptions in English so that everyone would understand them.

Work has included X-rays to show the underlying structure and ultra-violet scans of the paint work.

Some renovation work was carried out in the 19th century, and much of this was being removed and modern techniques being applied.

Two and a half panels have been stripped of layers of varnish, and it was interesting to see the contrast in the third panel.

The group were able to sit close to the paintings and see the wonderful brushwork and detail being revealed; for example, the embroidery on Lady Agnes's sleeve and armour in the centre painting.

The visit was thrilling, and the staff gave the group a wonderful presentation. Mr Reed will give a public talk when the work is completed in September.

St Donats has life-sized photos of the paintings on display which are one feature of this beautiful Grade 1 church.

CROWDS OUT IN FORCE TO SEE THE BOXING DAY HUNT IN COWBRIDGE

MORE than 100 horses and ponies rode down Cowbridge High Street on Boxing Day, and as these pictures by Mike Wilcock (MW) and Glyn Evans (GE) show, there were hundreds of spectators there to see them.



Santas galore, carols, and a Jumper Day!



Photos by
**SCOTT
NELSON.**

Santa Zumba For Shelter Cymru at Barry Comprehensive School.

Carol concert
STUDENTS and their families joined staff and governors for **Barry Comprehensive School's** annual Christmas carol service at St Mary's Church, Holton Road last week.

The large congregation were treated to a selection of traditional and modern hymns, songs and music, all performed to the music department's high standard. Students and teachers also gave traditional readings during the service.

We would like to thank everyone who made this very enjoyable festive celebration possible.

Jumper Day
STUDENTS and staff at **Barry Comprehensive** joined in with **Save the Children's** 'Christmas Jumper Day' event.

School jumpers were decorated with tinsel, baubles and lights or swapped entirely for a woolly with a festive theme. Participants had their photos taken in the



Rhys reading *'The Night Before Christmas'*.



Iestyn reading *'Every Day is Christmas'*.

boys through their paces teaching them **Latin** red and hip action.

Then we had a surprise performance from the in-house performers of 'What Did the Fox Say?'. This brought the house down again.

A huge thank you to Andrew Jones (Shelter Cymru) and to Sean Mayor, who organised the whole event. As a school, we are keen to continue to support Shelter Cymru in its commitment to keeping people in their homes.

AC



Back to the Coda - 'Driving home for Christmas'.



Miss Walters, Mr Piekiniak and students.



ABOVE: Josh, Brendan, Jordan, Mr Davies and Ben.

Who wants to build what, and where?

Mr Robert Williams - Keepers Cottage, Llandough -

Alterations and extension to include single storey garage and off road parking access.

Mr Andrew Williams - Redlands Court Farm, Five Mile Lane, Bonvilston -

Provision of private stables.

CTIL and Telefonica UK Ltd - Land at Port Road East, Barry -

Installation of a replacement 15m high streetworks monopole with replacement ground based equipment.

Mr Lance Carver - Woodlands ATC, Woodlands Road, Barry -

Complete demolition.

MA Hardy Ltd - New Farm, Port Road, Rhosce -

Farmworker's dwelling.

Mr Peter Hayman - Lettons House, Lettons Way, Dinas Powys -

Removal of condition 1 of approval

2011/00503/FUL, regarding occupancy of the property.

Mr Neil Moakson - The Extension, Lower Beaupre House, St Hilary -

Single dwelling house.

Orchard House enjoys carols with local groups



ABOVE: president-elect Robin Pitcher with Rotarians, Inner Wheel members and residents of Orchard House.

MEMBERS of the **Rotary Club of Barry and Inner Wheel** came together on the evening of December 17, for a carol service with the residents of **Orchard House, off Colcot Road, Barry.**

Rotary Club president-elect, Mr. Robin Pitcher, welcomed everyone on this special evening.

After the opening carol, 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing', Rotarian Mike Righton read a few verses from the Bible.

Pianist for the evening was Rotarian Meirion Evans who had also prepared the evening's programme.

Other carols included 'Once in Royal David's City', 'It Came Upon the Midnight Clear', 'Silent Night', and 'O Little Town of Bethlehem.'

These were interspersed with two humorous items read by Inner Wheel members Mrs Eryl Evans and Mrs

Beth Longley, and a musical contribution from Katy Brownjohn and her friend Lily.

Father Christmas also made a surprise appearance as everyone sang 'Jingle Bells!' After the final carol, 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing,' president elect Robin thanked the residents and staff of Orchard House for such a warm welcome and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Members of the Rotary Club of Barry are part of an international organization with one million members worldwide, forming a global network of business, professional and community volunteers.

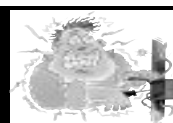
The Rotary Club of Barry meets weekly in the Mount Sorrel Hotel on Thursdays (6pm for 6.30pm). If you would like further information, please contact Peter Battle on 01446 710204, or visit www.ribi.org

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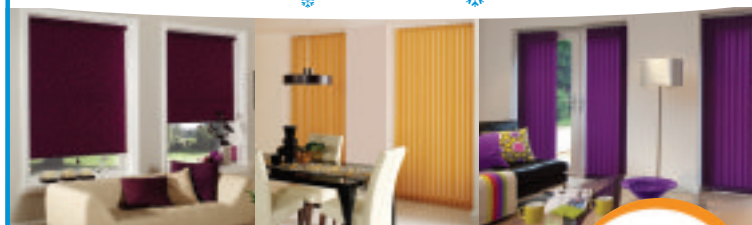
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Family Notices

GARRETT
Clarissa Mary (Mollie)
(nee Matthews)

Peacefully on Thursday December 19 after a short stay in the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, Mollie, aged 98 years, of Llantwit Major and formerly of Penarth. Beloved wife of the late Stanley, loving Mum of Caroline and the late Rosemary, mum-in-law of Ross, Nan of Simon and James and their partners Gwen and Kian, great-grandma of Leighton-Rose and Eden, will be sadly missed.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fommon. Funeral Tuesday January 7, service 1.30pm at St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major, followed by interment in Llantwit Major Cemetery. Family flowers only may be sent to the Funeral Home, donations in lieu, if desired, to RNIB Talking Books c/o J James, 11 Fommon Road, Rhosce, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 3DZ.

PEARSON

Elizabeth Joan

Suddenly on December 17 at Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, Joan of Boverton, beloved wife of the late Dave, dearly loved mother of Sue, Pam and Trisha, will be sadly missed by all her family.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fommon. Funeral Monday January 6, service 10.45am at St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major, followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend at 12 noon. No flowers by request.

CARMICHAEL

John
(19.01.1937 - 19.12.2013)

After a short and sudden illness John passed away peacefully at Llandough Hospital. Jean, Linda, Paul and Huw would like to thank all their family and friends for the support and love shown at their terrible loss.

He will be truly missed by all who knew him.

HENDERSON

Very peacefully on December 23 at Milsom House, St Athan, James Alfred, aged 96 years previously of Llantwit Major. Beloved husband of the late Barbara Rose, a loved father of Christine and the late David, cherished grandfather of David, Sian, James, Samantha and Emma. James will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Resting at A G Adams & Son Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry until the funeral on Friday, 10 January. Service and committal at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium where family and friends please meet at 2.15pm. Family flowers only, if desired, donations may be handed to the funeral director after the funeral for Headway (Brain Injury), Headway House, Rookwood Hospital, Fairwater Road, Cardiff, CF5 2YN.

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Birthdays

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8th January 2014

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Family Notices

SAVAGE
Margaret

Passed away peacefully on the 18th December 2013. Loving mother to Carolyn, Julian & Tim. Loving mother-in-law to John and Julie. Beloved grandmother to Rachel, Huw, Joe & Sam and great grandmother to Noah & Sebastian.

Funeral Service to be held at Cardiff and Glamorgan Memorial Park Crematorium, Port Road, Barry on Wednesday 8th January at 1.30pm. Family flowers only please, donations if desired, may be made to Alzheimer's Society, Devon House, 58 St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1LB. All enquires to Green Willow Funerals, 21a Station Road, Dinas Powys, CF64 4DE. Tel (029) 2051 4627.

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Mr Ken Broad – 13A Atlantic Trading Estate, Barry – Demolition of existing lock up facility and erection of new industrial premises split into four separate units.

Mr Philip Salter – 6 Jenkinsville, Penarth – Erection of rear glazed garden room.

Mr N Tsitsinaris – 70 Lewis Road, Llandough – Detached dwelling.
CTIL and Vodafone – Streetworks off Clive Place, Penarth – Removal of the existing Vodafone 3G only MTA 10m mock telegraph pole mast (11.6m to top of antenna shroud) and its replacement in the same location with a 15m (to top of antenna shroud) Hutchinson T-Range mock telegraph pole; removal of one 3107 equipment cabinet and installation of two Huawei 3900AL equipment cabinets, one Huawei Duplexor Cabinet and one Alifabs JSC cabinet; to enable the base station or provide shareable 2G, 3G and 4G RF coverage for Vodafone in accordance with Assembly Government

policy.

Mr Tim Matthews – Limefield House, Cross Ways, Cowbridge – Proposed single and two storey extensions and conservatory to dwelling; proposed garage, to replace existing outbuildings.

Mrs H Jeffries – Plot 160, The Hedgerows, White Farm, Barry – Proposed alteration of approved dwelling to include rear conservatory extension.

Mr Vlad Dudko – 99-100 High Street, Barry – External insulation to the building.

WE Morgan and Sons – Penuchadre Farm, Wick Road, St Brides Major – Installation of two farm scale wind turbines, with a maximum tip height of 42 metres, associated infrastructure and access track.

Mrs Catherine Maitland Evans – 5 Countess Place, Penarth – Single storey rear extension and new garden store.
Mr and Mrs Thomas – 29 Clevedon Avenue, Sully – Demolition of existing detached property and garage.

Vale of Glamorgan Council – Holton Road Primary School, Holton Road, Barry – Creation of an accessible

entrance to the Flying Start feeder unit; minor modifications to school building to allow for integration to Flying Start and the school building.

Mrs Mandy Terry – Low Fell, City, Llansannor, Cowbridge – Proposed garage conversion and extension.

Dr I S and Mrs M L Thomas – Greenway Cottage, Greenway Lane, Bonvilston – Proposed two storey extension to form living room and master bedroom to first floor.

Mr Thomas Salter – 17 Clive Place, Penarth – Removal of boundary wall and creation of off road parking for two vehicles.

Mr Dean Caddy – 15 St Lythans Road, Barry – Proposed demolition of existing garage, new single storey extension to form elderly/disabled accommodation.

Mr Michael Farley – 9 Augusta Road, Penarth – Alteration and extensions including demolition of existing rear single storey and chimney stack, and construction of rear two storey extension.

Simon Toner and Marina John – 20 Lakeside, Barry – Certificate of Lawfulness for work on property.

Kent Property Services – Downcross, Turkey Street, Llantwit Major – Renovation and extension to listed cot-

tage to rear of Downcross House to form new four-bed dwelling.

Lloyds Banking Group – 1 Windsor Road, Penarth – Alterations to existing stepped entrance into bank branch to form a level platform at finished floor level, with the installation of a DDA compliant low rise platform lift for wheelchair users.

Dr Paul Bridges – Red House, 60 Victoria Road, Penarth – Replacement of uPVC windows and reinstatement of chimney stack (non-functioning).

Mr D Laskey and Mrs M Bland – Land at Cross Common Road, Dinas Powys – Access to field including gate.

Mr Malcolm Evans – Treetops, Romilly Park, Barry – Proposal to construct double storey extension to side of existing dwelling.

Amethyst Healthcare – 228 Barry Road, Barry – Rear and side extension including loft accommodation to new extension to accommodate care home for four young adults.
Namulas Pension Trustees Limited – 38 Windsor Road, Penarth – Change of use from Class A1 (shops) to Class A3 (Hot Food Takeaway) and external alterations, including the installation of ventilation extraction equipment.

Tesco Stores Ltd – Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff – Installation of dry cleaning, key cutting, shoe and watch repairs pod to Class 1 retail premises.

Mr Steve Davies – 1 Greenfield Avenue, Dinas Powys – New single storey extension.

Mr and Mrs Richard and Rachel Disley – 34 Robinswood Crescent, Penarth – Rear extension, garage conversion, and part loft conversion.

Waitrose Ltd – Birds Lane, Cowbridge – External cafe banners and stainless steel support posts.

Mr Peter Loch – Glebe Farm, St Hilary – Proposed single storey extensions to side, front and rear; proposed garage; erection of polytunnels and solar panels.

Mr Guy Leach – The Old Post Office, 61-63 Eastgate, Cowbridge – Demolition of a section of existing building in association with the development of two two-bedroom apartments in lieu of approved four-bedroom house in old post office building, plus associated parking and private amenity space.

CADETS HEAD FOR THE BRIGHT LIGHTS... London, here we come!

RIGHT:
The Cadets have had a busy end to 2013!

WHAT a fantastic end to the year for 2117 (Kenfig Hill) Squadron RAF Air Cadets!

At the beginning of December in the capable hands of Flt Sgt (ATC) Kevin Gould and Sgt (ATC) Richard Peckham, cadets from Kenfig Hill, Aberkenfig and Porthcawl went on a nine-day educational visit to London.

There was an extra pair of helping hands this year as Mrs Gould, who has recently joined the civilian committee, accompanied the group.

While staying at RAF Northolt, they ventured into London on several visits.

They thoroughly enjoyed the week, visiting the Imperial War Museum, Chelsea Pensioners' gardens, and war memorials in and around London; Jewel Tower, Science Museum, and National Army Museum.

While visiting the Queen's Colour Squadron, they were taught some drill movements, which is always an asset.

They also visited the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, which houses one of the finest collections of tanks, military vehicles and large exhibits in the country.

A lot of walking was involved and on one day

the party walked around Hyde Park and looked at some of the memorials before going to Piccadilly Circus and then back to Nelson's Column.

With the help of Madeleine Moon MP, the cadets visited No 10 Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament where they had a full tour of both Houses with a talk on how Parliament works, and also got to stand where the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition stand during Prime Minister's Questions!

Staff and cadets from Kenfig Hill, Aberkenfig and Porthcawl, Wick Van Hire, Cowbridge ATC, Mrs Madeleine Moon MP – and, most of all, the people in the service and civilians who work at RAF Northolt who took time to look after the party while they were in London. **LT**

CADS CHAIRMAN STEPPING DOWN

RIGHT:
Kay, Gerda and The Snow Queen.

LONG-STANDING chairman of Cowbridge's dramatic society – **Coun Peter Knapp** – has announced that he will be standing down, following his elevation to Mayor-designate of Cowbridge with Llanblethian Council.

Peter said: "I am confident that the society will remain in good hands and we have lined up some great shows for 2014, including the comedies *God of Carnage* and *The 39 Steps*, which are described in a new booklet entitled 'What's On' at CADS, available from the Library in Old Hall Gardens.

"First, though, we are fortunate to have the Rain or Shine Theatre Company returning to Cowbridge on January 9 with their touring production of *The Snow Queen*, which I am sure will be a great show and enjoyed by all ages



between 6 and 106.

"This is a new adaptation by award-winning director James Reynard of the classic Hans Andersen tale of good triumphing over evil in a snowy land. Tickets are available from WG Davies in the High Street, or by phoning 01446 773874.

"The show (one night only) which has been touring to excellent reviews commences at 7pm in the Market Theatre (off the Butts) Cowbridge."

Previous visits of Rain or Shine to Cowbridge have been dogged by snow, ice or monsoon rains but this time the Snow Queen herself has promised all will be well with the weather – subject to change of course...

Maesteg Mayor dives into the icy waters – all for charity!



Coun Ross Thomas, the Mayor of Maesteg, took part in the Porthcawl Christmas Day swim – wearing a 1920s traditional bathing costume! He told THE GEM: "With the help of my charity committee (above), we raised around £1,800 for Maesteg Community Day Hospital and the Maesteg 3rd Scouts Group.

Seasonal action for Farmers!

THE Christmas meeting of the Glamorgan Farmers' Golf Society held recently at RAF St Athan Golf Club attracted 36 competitors, all competing for the usual seasonal prizes and also the opportunity to return home with the RAF Shield which the winning member retains for the next 12 months.

Prior to arriving at the first tee the members were treated to a delightful drop of Irish Whiskey and home-made shortbread biscuits which Mrs Leslie Thomas, wife of society captain Gwyn Thomas, provided.

This very generous seasonal treat was much appreciated and set the tone for what proved to be a most enjoyable event.

In a closely contested competition the final outcome was decid-

ed with Aubrey Bowen having a better back nine than Clive Thomas.

Standing on the 16th tee Clive had a commanding six point lead over his nearest rivals, but a disastrous finish by Clive who only scored one point on the last three holes proved costly.

Both Clive and Aubrey finished with 32 stableford points with Aubrey having one more point on the back nine than Clive.

In third place was Tony McCarthy with 31 points followed by Geraint Davies who scored 30 points. Llanccadle farmer David Williams, making an extremely quick return to action after being hospitalised recently as a result of losing an argument with a tree, finished in fifth place also with 30 points.

Nearest the pin on the par three holes were Martin David, Andrew Thomas, Clive Thomas and also Mike Lee, whose round was interrupted when a deflated tyre on a

buggy he was sharing with Lyn Thomas attracted a few seasonal comments!

Dan Jarvis, not for the first time, hit the longest drive on the selected hole to win the Bear Hotel, Cowbridge sponsored prize.

Martin Edwards, enjoying a rare Thursday off from exercising hounds, correctly guessed 31 balls would fail to return home to collect the premier Turf sponsored bottle of whiskey raising £70 in the process for the Llantwit Major Lifeguards.

The society's next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 30 at Whitchurch Golf Club, Cardiff and will be sponsored by Llanharan Concrete Company Ltd.

The captain and committee members of The Glamorgan Farmers' Golf Society wish fellow golfers and readers of this column a very happy New Year. **TMcC**

Did you know you can now find The GEM on Twitter? For all your news from the Vale follow us @gem_news

COWBRIDGE COMPREHENSIVE SPORTS ROUND-UP

Treble glory for 5x60 badminton!

AFTER storming to victory in the Badminton key stage 4 competition, it was the turn of the junior boys' team to take centre stage.

The venue once again was Cogan Leisure Centre in Penarth and although the journey there took longer than expected, this wasn't enough to take focus off the job in hand.

The team of Will Stewart, Evan Thomas, Harry Donnithorne and Michael Cox were ready to bring the silverware home.

First opponents for Cowbridge were Barry Comprehensive who provided plenty of passion. Will and Evan comfortably won their singles matches, with Harry and Michael following up with calm and collected triumph in their doubles.

The final doubles matches saw Will paired

with Harry and Michael paired with Evan, with both partnerships easing to comfortable wins to make the overall match score 5-0.

This trend continued in games against Llantwit Major, Stanwell, Bro Morgannwg and St Richard Gwyn, with Cowbridge comfortably topping the round robin group.

In second place were Stanwell, who would be Cowbridge's opponents in the final. Will Stewart and Evan Thomas got the team off to the perfect start with convincing wins in the singles.

Nerves got the better of Michael and Harry, who unfortunately lost a tight doubles game, to make the score 2-1, going into the final two matches.

Victories in the concluding matches made the final score 4-1 and Cowbridge were proud to regain the trophy they lost to their opponents

last year.

After last year's team won the national 5x60 badminton competition, the junior girls team of Kate Workman, Freya Johnson, Rhian Crossman and Abby Johnson had a great deal to live up to this time round. However, they arrived at the venue confident, calm and ready for action.

Their first opponents were St Richard Gwyn, who have a strong reputation for producing talented badminton players.

On this occasion Cowbridge were too strong and they triumphed 4-1.

Second up were Llantwit Major who brought a youthful side to the tournament. The difference in age groups showed as Cowbridge comfortably achieved victory 5-0.

The final group game was against Stanwell who beat the senior girls in the final of the key stage 4 competition.

However, this time round the Cowbridge team, full of confidence, ran out 5-0 winners, retaining the trophy.

Three out of the four teams entered now move into the south east region tournament, being held during the spring term.

Expectations are high but all three teams will need to move up a gear to beat the incoming teams from Cardiff, Bridgend, RCT and Merthyr.

After an unsuccessful venture to the national finals last year, the boys' badminton team of Sam Stewart, Matthew Reynolds, Finn Murphy and Josh Evans have returned to competition with devastating effect, determined to right the wrongs of the previous campaign.

The first port of call was the Vale of Glamorgan 5x60 tournament and having won the competition for the previous two years, the biggest threat to a third straight title must have



ABOVE: The year 7 football team, who have qualified for the Welsh Cup

been complacency.

The first opponents were a competitive St Cyres outfit, sporting new faces and a determination not seen in previous years.

After a difficult start, Sam Stewart's quality shone through and he delivered the first of a 4-1 team win, with Josh Evans combining passion and skill to win his two matches.

Next up were a very competitive Stanwell team, who are widely renowned for their proficiency with a racket. However, on this day, those abilities fell well short of the standards set by a resolute and unwavering Cowbridge team.

Having blown away the cobwebs against St Cyres, the flair and elegance of Matthew Reynolds combined with the dogged determination of Finn Murphy and Josh Evans resulted in a resounding 5-0 victory.

Last up during the group stage was a youthful and inexperienced Llantwit team, who although looked out of their depth, put in a gritty and heroic performance to try and deny a rampaging Cowbridge side.

Unfortunately for Llantwit, Cowbridge were in an unforgiving mood and again steam-rolled their opponents on the way to the final with another 5-0 win.

The final brought Cowbridge head to head with St Richard Gwyn who also comfortably won their group, albeit a slightly easier task.

The gulf in class was obvious from the outset with Sam Stewart and Matthew Reynolds securing victory in a convincing manner.

Finn and Josh followed this up with another win in the doubles and with a 3-0 lead the squad eased to the title, winning the last two doubles matches.

The team now advance to the south east competition at Cogan Leisure Centre in Penarth, hoping to emulate last year's championship winning performance. On this performance their chances of doing that look good.

FOOTBALL

The Year 7 football

team played Llanishen High School on Thursday, December 5, in the semi-final of the Cardiff and Vale regional qualifier for the Welsh Cup.

Victory and a place in the final would assure them of qualification.

The conditions for the game were not ideal, with the strong winds making every facet of the game difficult.

With Cowbridge's back to the wind in the first half, they were the stronger; with Llanishen's back to the wind in the second half, they were the stronger. Both teams struggled to get the ball under control, and really threaten the goalkeepers.

With the scores level five minutes before time, the game had 'penalties' written all over it. That was until Cowbridge scrambled the ball clear to Edward Thomas, who sprinted up the wing with his lightning pace.

His cross was an excellent one, but was partially dealt with by a Llanishen defender. The ball then dropped to Bryn Lloyd, who fired a shot towards the Llanishen goal, only for the ball to again be blocked by a defender.

In pinball fashion, the ball then rebounded off the defender, and curved around the outside of the goalkeeper and into the back of the net. A lucky goal, but at this stage of the game, we would take it.

Two minutes were left on the clock, and Cowbridge held strong, with Jake Thomas controlling the centre of the park, and Matthew Dewhurst marshalling his defensive line extremely effectively.

Well done Year 7. In conditions like that, it is never easy to play the standard of football we are used to playing, but you adapted your game, never gave up, and ultimately came away with the win. Well done again, and now the Welsh Cup is calling!

Player of the match: Jake Thomas and Matthew Dewhurst.

ROWING

Tom Jose and Selina Radcliffe (both year 9) represented Cowbridge

Comprehensive at the Welsh Schools Indoor Rowing Championships on December 6, held at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff.

There were hundreds of competitors from all over Wales along with a few English schools teams as well. Both Tom and Selina came fourth in their age groups, beating off stiff competition from many more experienced rowers.

They both then took part in the British Indoor Rowing Championships the following day representing their rowing club (CVSRA - Cardiff and Vale Schools Rowing Academy).

It was another day of stiff competition but Tom won silver and Selina came eighth. It was the first time they had competed in the indoor championships and so were very pleased with their results.

NETBALL
Year 8 and 9 played St

Richard Gwyn.

Despite being a very windy and cold afternoon, all girls played exceptionally well. The year 9s won 11-1, and the year 8s won 4-1.

Player of the match: year 9 - Annabelle Hegarty, year 8 - Mali Howell.

HOCKEY

The under-16 hockey team played against Brynteg.

Cowbridge won 3-0 with goals being scored by Sian Smith, Jemma Viney and Rosa Hartmann. Player of the match was Genevieve Kirk.

Team: Hannah Lee, Megan Duncombe, Laurie Thomas, Marne Adams, Hannah Lister-Sims, Hannah Clarke, Ellie Eddy-Williams, Megan McNamee, Evie Williams, Jemma Viney, Rosa Hartmann, Sian Smith and Genevieve Kirk.

Badminton's talent on show

THE annual 5x60 badminton tournament was once again held at Cogan Leisure Centre in Penarth.

Fierce rivalries were destined to be resumed during this year's competition with Stanwell School in particular renowned for their aptitude with a racket.

Interesting to see was the depth of talent being turned out by the Vale schools, with many players performing to a very high standard and this made for very competitive tournaments at both age groups.

In the 5 x 60 events, each team of four players played two singles matches and three doubles matches, in a best of five contests.

In a pulsating and exhilarating competition the runners up from the year 7 and 8 girl's competition were St Richard Gwyn and the winning

team were from Cowbridge.

In the year 7 and 8 boy's competition, the team from Stanwell took the runner up position with Cowbridge comfortably taking the top prize.

In the year 9 and 10 girls competition the runners up were Cowbridge with Stanwell deservedly taking first place.

The boy's competition was very hard fought, but again Cowbridge took first place with a very spirited St Richard Gwyn side in second.

The winners of each competition will now go through to play in the regional event where they will face stiff competition from teams from Methyr, Cardiff and RCT.

A special mention should be made for the 10 volunteers from Cardiff and Vale College who umpired the competition and ensured it ran smoothly from the outset.

Season ends at Kart club

LLANDOW Kart Club brought the curtain down on its 2013 season with the traditional Celtic Challenge finale on the opening weekend of December.

Run to the 'alternate' format of timed qualifying, heat, pre-final and final, the event is designed to bring a fun end to a hard year of racing, while providing an opportunity for the winners to leave with the recognised 'CC' plate, which is retained for the following year.

Two hardy Bambinos came out to play at the event, with Ella Stevens and Nathan Browning both achieving another gold award for their efforts on a cold and damp track.

Despite it being the 'end of term', the Cadet field still produced the biggest turn-out, with 20 karts taking to the track across three classes. New club champion Ethan Ling headed up the Honda contingent, but was denied another title as Stuart Ferguson emerged as the one to beat, topping all four sessions to take a clean sweep.

Ling was second fastest in qualifying, but had to settle for third place in each of the three races, as Oscar Ferguson took second spot in both the heat and pre-qualifying, and Joshua Martin did likewise in the final, after Ferguson ran into misfortune.

Without new champion Tom Rawlings, who took the opportunity to step up to another class in preparation for 2014, the Comer class was won by Connor Kearney, who came good in the races after lagging a little behind his rivals in the timed session.

Max Fenlon had been quickest in qualifying, but did not make the top three overall, as Kieran Clarke and Thomas Nippers followed Kearney home.

The IAME class featured just two runners, with Shay Keough getting the better of Ethan Rees.

With new champion Cristiano Nardone and otherwise dominant Ben Stevens both graduating to the senior ranks, Junior Honda was reduced to just three drivers,

and Kristian Prosser wasted little time in taking control, topping each of the day's four sessions, ahead of Tom Ford and Patrick Hill.

As he had in the final round of the summer championship, Ford doubled up with appearances in Junior Rotax, where he again locked horns with former Honda rival Thomas Croydon.

The pair had to settle for battling over third and fourth places, however, as the more experienced Rob Ellis and Ceran Sokhi - stepping up from Minimax - set the pace. Ellis, as befits the role of club champion, came out on top each time, winning each race with an increased margin.

With Sokhi stepping up and Jodie Handford missing, Joe Pritchard was the lone Minimax entrant, but raced hard at the back of the Junior Rotax grid.

The eight-man Junior TKM field was led throughout by Ryan Edwards, despite the best efforts of old rivals Scott Morris and Matthew Ayres, who filled the podium positions in each session. Class debutant Rawlings made an immediate impact, qualifying fifth fastest and racing hard to eventually claim fourth in the main event, beating 2013 Welsh and club champion Yousuf Ashraf in the process.

After a tough year, where a dearth of entries saw the class cancelled on more than a couple of occasions, Senior Honda enjoyed a return to double figures for the season finale, with no fewer than 12 karts on track.

The numbers were swelled by the arrival of Stevens and Nardone from the junior ranks, as well as the return of veterans Chris Lipscomb, Nick Turley and Nicholas Rees and a seasonal debut for Roberto Nardone.

Stevens dared to beat Lipscomb and challenge senior champion Paul Saunders in qualifying, and then proved that his form was for real by winning the pre-final, but had to give best to heat winner Turley when it mattered most. Despite that, the youngster still left with some silverware, while Monty Gorringer beat Saunders to the final step of

the podium.

The Honda Heavyweight class returned courtesy of Hugh Jones, but there was to be no repeat of his October heroics - where he won outright - as he finished seventh overall.

Senior Rotax remained in double figures after another strong season, and Daryl Henderson picked up from where he had left off in November's championship finale, winning all three races after topping qualifying.

James Johnson proved to be the biggest thorn in Henderson's side, taking second spot in each session, and, when Steven Handford failed to start the pre-final, it opened the door for Zach Jones to establish himself as number three for the rest of the day.

RESULTS

BAMBINO - Gold Award, Nathan Browning (CRG); Ella Stevens (CK).

CADET HONDA - 1, Stuart Ferguson (Project One); 2, Joshua Martin (Project One); 3, Ethan Ling (Project One).

CADET COMER - 1, Connor Kearney (Zip); 2, Kieran Clarke (Zip); 3, Thomas Nippers (Zip).

CADET IAME - 1, Shay Keough (Zip); 2, Ethan Rees (Zip).

JUNIOR HONDA - 1, Kristian Prosser (7Kart); 2, Tom Ford (MS); 3, Patrick Hill (Wright).

JUNIOR TKM - 1, Ryan Edwards (Tonykart); 2, Scott Morris (Tonykart); 3, Matthew Ayres (Jade).

JUNIOR ROTAX - 1, Rob Ellis (Kosmic); 2, Ceran Sokhi (Kosmic); 3, Thomas Croydon (Gillard).

MINI MAX - 1, Joe Pritchard (Tonykart).

SENIOR HONDA - 1, Nick Turley (MS); 2, Ben Stevens (7Kart); 3, Monty Gorringer (7Kart).

SENIOR HONDA HEAVYWEIGHT - 1, Hugh Jones (MS).

SENIOR ROTAX - 1, Daryl Henderson (Gillard); 2, James Johnson; 3, Zach Jones.

BEST NOVICE - Dylan Dinham (Honda Cadet).

DRIVER OF THE DAY - Oscar Ferguson (Cadet Honda).

CL



The young coaches with Rhys Williams.

YOUNG COACHES ARE LEARNING THE ROPES

THE Vale Council has launched an Olympic legacy programme, entitled Coaches of the Future, to help inspire a generation and give young people the opportunity to develop an involvement in sports leadership and coaching.

The scheme was launched at the Civic Offices in Barry with 19 individuals attending (age 16-18) from around the Vale.

The guest speaker was Great Britain and Wales athlete Rhys Williams, who gave an insight into how invaluable coaches were

in his success on the athletics track.

The coaches had already taken part in an intensive week of training during October half term. They completed their Level 2 in community sports leadership, first aid, netball leaders, badminton leaders and Dragon multi-skills training course.

All 19 of the COTF will now be volunteering in their secondary school, local primary school or community sports club.

They will have further training in the near future and will complete their coach education Level 1 in their chosen sports between now and April 2014.

Coun Gwyn John, cabinet member for leisure, parks, culture and sports development said: "The scheme provides an excellent opportunity for young people to get on the coaching ladder when they are young and to develop their knowledge of their sport to pass on to players and volunteers in the game."

"I have been a football coach for 40 years and I have enjoyed every moment of the experience of coaching and seeing the development and improvement of those I have worked with. I would encourage all young people to take the opportunities offered them and sign up today."

Who wants to build what, and where in the Vale?

Mr Chris Wood – 95 Main Street, Barry – Retention of ground floor flat.

Mr Terry Morgan – 24 Forrest Road, Penarth – Construction of new two-storey rear extension. New dormer bedroom window to front elevation.

Demolition of existing single storey flat roof extension.

Mr Alun Thomas – Great House Farm, Llanmaes – Agricultural steel framed building.

Mr Ray Simkiss – Tyr Ardd, Llandough, Nr Cowbridge – Two storey extension providing bathroom and additional kitchen area.

Mr Barrie James – Cerdd y Don, Ewenny Road, St Brides Major – Attached garage and single storey annexe extension.

Mr and Mrs Tayebb and Carlyn Mirza – 38 Longmeadow Drive, Dinas Powys – Single storey rear extension and internal remodeling.

Barry Island Junior and Infant School – Clive Road, Barry – Proposed new classroom structure/building to replace an existing outdoor shelter which is in a dangerous structural condition.

with pumps to pump the water out. The walls will remain unfinished and a T and G woodchip floor will be installed.

Mr Glyn Jones – Land at St Johns Well, St Athan – To extend time periods for the submission of reserved matters details and for the implementation of the permission.

Mr P Motte – United World College of the Atlantic, St Donat's Castle, St Donat's – Internal alterations and refurbishment of the library, including general upgrade of all lighting, power sockets, and heating, the installation of an internal platform lift to gain disabled access to first floor of the castle, addressing the level of differences by introducing raised section of flooring and raising the height of an existing door opening, installation of single glazed minimal screens within three existing stone arched openings to provide separation between the main body of the library – and the proposed seminar area.

Mr Ian Beresford – Rose Cottage, Llanmaes – Proposed detached garage to store classic cars and to include an external log store and recycling area.

Mr Chapman – 5 Railway Terrace, Penarth – Usage for office administration. Carlton Communications Ltd –

Land off Old Port Road, Culverhouse Cross (ITV) – Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of site for residential purposes.

Mr and Mrs John Ellis – 2 Orchard Drive, Barry – Storage building with personal car and caravan storage on yard to rear of 2 Orchard Drive.

Dr Dominic Griffiths – Chapel View Barn, Clwd Coch, Nr Cowbridge – Completion of conversion of garage to habitable space, specifically a laundry room.

Conversion of other two bays of garage undertaken in 2007 as a result of planning permission granted to previous owner.

Newydd Housing Association – 21 St Garmon Road, Penarth – proposed rear single storey extension/adaptation.

Ms Jo Fraser Jones – 42 Golwg y Coed, Barry – The construction of a single storey rear extension.

Mr and Mrs S Sherwood – 45 Althorpe Drive, Penarth – new extension to rear of property, to provide at ground floor, new cloakroom and WC, dining area and lounge and at first floor, new fourth master bedroom and ensuite bathroom.

Refurbish shop unit/extension.

Michael A Davies – St Iltyd's Church, Llantwit Major – Remove two Yew trees and one Palm tree.

Mr Will Parsons – Llanmaes House, Llanmaes – Turkey Oak, crown reduce by one third to reduce weight on heavy lateral branches and prune to a suitable growing point.

Mrs Audrey Preston – Kings Hall Court, Wick Road, St Brides Major – Proposed alterations and garage conversion to form granny annexe.

Mr David Evans – Cardiff Boat Sales, Compass House, Penarth – Boat sales and coffee shop.

Mr John Gough – 8/9 Glebe Street, Penarth – Extension and refurbishment to provide two residential units.

Refurbish shop unit/extension.

Mr and Mrs S Sherwood – 45 Althorpe Drive, Penarth – new extension to rear of property, to provide at ground floor, new cloakroom and WC, dining area and lounge and at first floor, new fourth master bedroom and ensuite bathroom.

Mr Graham Oddy – Maesydd Farm, Llangan – Proposed glazed elongated walkway (forming link

Peugeot's 2008 is an urban crossover

by **TIM SAUNDERS**

PEUGEOT calls its 2008 an urban crossover; a five-door estate that sits high off the road like a 4x4, but without the uneconomical permanent all-wheel-drive.

However, it's fitted with a grip control that features modes for mud, sand, snow and normal everyday driving, making it more agile than a standard car (watch the video at testdrives.biz).

This function provides much-needed traction to the front wheels when required.

It can also be cancelled at speeds of up to 30mph, giving the driver ultimate control.

I'm testing a 1.6 e-HDi Allure model, which is basically the mid-range offering.

Standard features include 16" alloy wheels, power folding chrome door mirrors, rear parking aid, dark tinted rear windows, stainless steel front and rear scuff plates, cruise control, speed limiter, all-around electric windows and air conditioning.

Parkers, the used car experts say: "Skid plates front and rear supplement more aggressively-styled alloy wheels, either in 16 or 17-inch sizes, sitting beneath squared-off wheel arches."

"A kink in the roof above the rear door evokes memories of an early Land Rover Discovery, though it embellishes the space with chrome rather than glass. It's a material used throughout the car's exterior."

"That familiar, and slightly fussy, Peugeot family face is adorned with a bold grille outlined in the shiny metal, as are the roof rails, door bottoms and wing mirrors."

It makes for a rather glitzy ambience to what could otherwise be considered a slightly derivative design statement."

Over the course of our time together we head into the New Forest, Hampshire and on into Dorset and Wiltshire, which provides ideal terrain for testing its abilities.

The concept is simple; Peugeot has created a more robust estate car that embraces the challenges that the modern family will throw at it – a family like the Saunders clan, which decides to take a few days out and have a well-earned rest at Sandy Balls, the self-catering holiday park in the New Forest.

That means loading



The Peugeot 2008.

everything but the kitchen sink and although the boot is not large enough to accommodate our tandem pram it does tackle the smaller single pushchair, a reasonably sized suitcase and of course eldest daughter Harriett's Trunki.

Fortunately, a Farad roofbox from roofcarriers.co.uk provides extra storage space, making for a more comfortable journey.

Otherwise everything else would have to go inside.

With comfortable leather trimmed seats

and smatterings of metal trim throughout, the 2008 Allure feels well put together, if a little minimal in its interior design.

Its raised height gives an added sense of security, even if the diesel unit is at times sluggish, especially when pulling away.

In the depths of the countryside, grip control comes into its own where during heavy downpours, thick mud becomes an increasing problem.

A turn of the dial in the centre console and the driver can rest

assured that traction is optimised in conditions of poor grip, giving increased control.

When an oncoming tractor forces a sudden stop and a hasty detour into an unwelcoming unmade lay-by, the Peugeot makes no complaints.

FACTS AT A GLANCE:

New price range: £17,245;
0-60mph: 12.8secs;
Top speed: 113mph;
Economy: 78.5mpg (extra urban).
VED: £0 for the first year. £20 a year standard rate.

KENZIE IS AIMING FOR THE TOP OF INLINE HOCKEY!

SHEER hard work, dedication and natural ability in sport certainly paid off for 11 year old local youngster, Mackenzie Whilding; known as Kenzie to her friends.

Kenzie is a junior member of St Athan Golf Club but the sport she enjoys and excels at the most is inline hockey, a game she only decided to pursue in January 2013.

Kenzie plays for Cardiff Capitals and in the space of a year has already earned nationally recognised awards by the British Inline Puck Hockey Association (BIPHA).

These include the under-10s south Wales top goaltender, the national top goaltender, the national dream team goaltender and south Wales' top goaltender runner up in the under-12s team even though she was still only 10 at the time.

Kenzie has now achieved her ultimate dream; the only Welsh player selected to represent TEAM GB in the under-12s division for inline hockey being held in Los Angeles in June 2014.

In preparation for the



tour, training schedules are to be held every couple of weeks in Rotherham, which means Kenzie will need to show exceptional commitment over the coming months and will be relying heavily on her parents, Sam and Keiran, to assist her with their time and the transportation to the organising training sessions.

Unfortunately the cost of the Los Angeles trip and the expense of additional equipment, etc, must all be self-funded therefore Kenzie would

be delighted to hear from any company that would be able to assist with sponsorship or indeed any individuals who feel they would like to make a donation, however small.

Kenzie or her parents can be contacted on 01446 751105 and will happily answer any questions or provide further information as requested, alternatively they may be contacted by post at 3 Drake Close, St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 4JF.

CM

YOUNG GARETH 'CALLS THE HORSES'

GARETH TOPHAM (24) is the youngest and newest racecourse commentator in the country.

Gareth from the Fairwater area of Cardiff was born in St David's Hospital, Canton and was a pupil of Cantonian High School, before moving to Leeds to study sports journalism at university.

He said: "Sports journalism was the closest

**ON AND OFF THE TURF
with BRIAN LEE**

course I could get so that I could become involved in horse-racing broadcasting."

Commentating is something Gareth wanted to do from the age of ten. He was attending primary school at Pentreban when he won a competition to appear on the children's channel Nickelodeon as a budding commentator. This involved him

going to Taunton Races one afternoon and seeing what the job actually entailed.

An accomplished pianist, Gareth learned his trade commentating at point-to-points, harness race meetings and even at greyhound tracks. He also provided voiceovers for betting shops. And now he can be heard on racing channels such as Channel 4, Racing UK and ATR.

He told me: "It all really started when I used to watch racing on a Saturday afternoon in front of the television set with mum and dad. I enjoyed hearing the commentator say something and then hear how the crowd would react to what he said. I loved it and thought maybe one day I could do that. The rest as they say is history."

Gareth commentated at Chester earlier this year to a crowd of 24,000; when he said: "They're off" for the first race the roar from the stands was electrifying.

He said: "It was a hugely exciting day with many close finishes and my pulse was

certainly racing."

He thanks fellow commentators Simon Holt, Darren Owen and Lee McKenzie for helping in his training, along with several other commentators.

Gareth is one of 16 commentators who travel the country 'calling the horses', as they say, at meetings big and small over the jumps or on the flat.

He drives hundreds of miles to some race meetings and he is such a gent that he astonishes me when he says his pet hate is cyclists, and admits to being "the world's most impatient and angry driver."

Having assisted Gareth at point-to-point meetings by giving him background information on some of the horses and riders, when standing alongside him from his commentary position, I know first hand how good he is at his job.

They say there is no such thing as a certainty in racing but as far as I am concerned, it is a dead cert that we will be hearing a lot more about this presentable young man in the future.

Hockey club play their annual 'Turkeys' game

PENARTH Hockey Club brought the curtain down on the first half of its 2013-14 season with the traditional 'turkeys' game between its senior and junior members at Barry Sports Centre.

Two sides, made up of players either side of the 30-year mark, were press-ganged into one further appearance after a hard-fought autumn league campaign, bribed by the promise of a liquid warm-up rather than the usual flexing and stretching.

With some old faces making a welcome return for the weekend, the line-ups – under the command of Jones and Grant respectively – featured a blend of players from the 1st, 2nd and veteran XIs, with Phil Lane bravely volunteering to umpire solo.

As has become the norm with turkeys games, players were given the opportunity to try out positions unfamiliar to them on a regular Saturday, and 25 minutes of goalless action highlighted just how out of their depth some were.

Although the seniors enjoyed their moments in front of goal, returnee keeper Ben Jewess was rarely called on to make a save while, at the other end, 1st XI shotstopper Mark Harris single-handedly kept his regular teammates at bay.

The deadlock was finally broken in scrappy fashion as 2nd XI keeper Calum Grant led from the front, bundling the ball across the line after another rearguard action from Harris ultimately came up short in the face of greater opposition forces.

The sides turned around just a

goal apart, but the juniors emerged from the break determined to prove their superiority.

It didn't take long for the lead to double, as Sam Wooding – having not featured in the opening half – was left uncaged in the seniors' 25, and comfortably beat Harris in a one-on-one contest.

The seniors refused to buckle, and with Craig Llewellyn – who had clearly left his 'shooting boots' at home – drifting back to a more familiar sweeping role, the side enjoyed more opportunities in front of goal.

However, the older side could not find a way past Jewess, and fell further behind with a quarter of the game remaining as Chris Baker fired home from the right-side, Harris only aware of the jet-stream passing his facemask before the sound of ball on post signalled the third goal of the game.

It was shortly after this apparently decisive moment, and with time ticking down, that Lane invoked the 'next goal the winner' rule, giving the seniors added incentive to press forward.

Having spurned one chance to wrap the game up, when Jones missed from the penalty spot, age finally told over beauty when a quick ball from the back was worked into the juniors' 'D' and eventually forced home by Freddie Thomas to steal a famous victory.

Despite the obvious disappointment of seeing their hard work undone in such devastating fashion, the juniors sportingly provided the post-match refreshments, with copious – and welcome – lashings of homemade chilli on tap to accompany the tra-

ditional liquid refreshment at Penarth Athletic Club.

TEAMS:

U-30s: Calum Grant (captain), Tom Harran, Gareth Hurman, Sam Wooding, Arthur Jones, Joe Wells, Tom Parkinson, Chris Baker, Mat Noble, David Williams, Ben Jewess (GK) **O-30s:** Graeme Jones (captain), Dave Stevens, Richard Baker, Mark 'Jonty' Thomas, Rob Harrison, Dave Thomas, Freddie Thomas, Zbig Sobierski, Mark Robinson, Sam Doherty, Ian Smith, James 'Cuzzler' Davies, Craig Llewellyn, Mark Harris (GK)

Players young and old have a chance to lick their wounds for a few weeks before the veterans get things under way again with a mid-January fixture against Whitechurch.

League action resumes a week later, with the 1st XI hosting Wotton-under-Edge and the 2nd XI travelling west to take on bottom side Trinity St Davids.

Penarth Hockey Club always welcomes new, old and returning players, umpires, supporters, friends and helpers regardless of age and ability.

Training takes place on the artificial turf at Barry Sport Centre every Wednesday, with the juniors in action between 6-7pm and seniors between 7-8pm.

Further information can be obtained from club secretary Dave Stevens at: d_stevens81@hotmail.co.uk.

CL

Try American Football!

Want to try something new this New Year? Why not try American Football!

The South Wales Warriors American Football team are recruiting for the upcoming season.

There will be an open training/taster session in Newport on January 5 from 1pm to 4pm. Registration cost £5 which includes kit and pitch hire.

The taster session will be held at: NHSOB RFC, Yew Tree Lane, Caerleon, Newport, Gwent, NP18 1LL. Organisers will be

holding a 'rookie day' on January 19.

The day will consist of a NFL Combine format, with participants having a go at a range of different positions and drills.

This session will be held at Llanharan RFC from 1pm-4pm. Registration cost £5 which includes kit and pitch hire.

The address is: Llanharan RFC, Bridgend Road, Llanharan, Rhondda Cynon Taf, CF72 9RD.

Visit southwaleswarriors.co.uk for more information.

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GEM sport

KARATE CLUB LOOKS BACK ON A SUCCESSFUL YEAR!



ABOVE: (back row, left to right): Michael Scannell, Rhys Hilditch, Luke Sloan, Daniel Johnson, Kirsty Stuart. (front row) Paige Bush, Steven Dodd, Tahnee Farman, Logan Wheeler, Robert Orchard. (kneeling) Sensei Simon Dodd.

THE Llantwit Major and St Athan Shotokan Karate Club finished 2013 on a massive high note.

In one of the proudest moments for any instructor, Sensei Simon Dodd (3rd Dan) saw two of his students, Kirsty Stuart and Michael Scannell, achieve their black belts (1st Dan).

Their superb standard was commented on by senior members of the Welsh Karate Union, and they were lauded by chief instructor Paul Watson (6th Dan) as being two of the most diligent and hardworking members of the WKU.

He said to all the new dan grades: "A black belt is not something you wear, it is something you become".

This was reinforced by Sensei Simon Dodd, who said that a black belt that never gives up.

On December 14, members of the club enjoyed a superb three-course Christmas lunch at Il Vesuvio in Llantwit Major. This was an opportunity, alongside the excellent food and wonderful service, for Sensei Simon to thank the hard work of all the students this year, and the parents for their support.

As a surprise, Michael Scannell and Kirsty Stuart were presented with their 1st Dan diplomas, and they received silk black belts embroidered with their names in Japanese Kanji.

In karate, no person is ever referred to as 'master', they are simply Sensei: 'teacher'.

The silk belt gradually wears away back to white as a symbol to show that we never stop learning.

We wish to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the staff at Il Vesuvio for their wonderful support of the club, and the excellent welcome we received. The quality of the food and service made it a memorable occasion.

After the meal on December 14 came a grading on December 15 for all other grades.

In an excellent display of karate, all members achieved their goal, with some getting a slight surprise.

Congratulations go to white belts Tahnee Farman, Paige Bush, Benedict Wainwright on achieving their Orange belts (9th Kyu); Logan Wheeler, Robert



ABOVE: Father and son Benedict Wainwright and John Wainwright with Sensei Simon.

Orchard, Rhys Hilditch and Luke Sloan moving from Orange to Red belt (8th Kyu); and to Steven Dodd (Sensei Simon's older brother) going from Red to Yellow belt (7th Kyu).

A surprise was in store for two other white belts, John Wainwright and Daniel Johnson, who displayed such excellent ability that Sensei Paul Watson saw fit to double grade them from white, missing orange, to red belt. An excellent and rare achievement.

Sadly, on the day of the grading Ieuan Parker was ill and unable to attend. However, it was arranged that on December 19, he was subjected to a private grading with the chief instructor, being put through his paces during the course of a lesson.

By the end, there was no doubt of his ability and so he was awarded his Orange belt (9th Kyu).

Huge congratulations all round, it just gets harder, and more rewarding, from here!

As a final surprise, unbeknown to Logan, Tahnee and Paige, Sensei Simon was in attendance on the weekly awards assembly at Eagleswell Primary School.

On cue from head-teacher Mr Watkins, he entered the assembly to present their grading certificates in front of the rest of the school so that their friends and teachers could share in their proud moment.

Finally, to finish off the year, three members of the club competed in the WKU Annual Junior Kata Competition.

This was the first time Logan Wheeler, Tahnee Farman and Benedict Wainwright had competed and, overcoming their nerves, they put on an excellent display.

With Sensei Simon and Kirsty Stuart both as referees, with very strict standards, they knew they had some hard work to do. Tahnee finished in third place against some very experienced competitors.

Logan and Benedict were up against some stiff competition, and while they did not place in the final three, their excellent performances left their instructor very proud.

A new season starts on January 8, and everyone is welcome in the club, which meets every Wednesday in the Gathering Place, St Athan, 7.30pm to 9pm, and Friday in Llantwit Major Leisure Centre 7pm to 8.30pm.

Contact Simon Dodd on 07917 441138 for more details.

The Welsh Karate Union is one of the oldest and largest karate associations in Wales, and is a non-profit organisation run entirely by highly qualified volunteers. All instructors hold valid coaching awards, insurance and are DBS checked.

SD

Hockey Club issues invite

COWBRIDGE Junior Hockey Club meets at Cowbridge Leisure Centre on Tuesdays, from 6.45pm to 7.45pm.

The cost is £3 per session and equipment is provided. The age range is seven years old to 15.

Girls and boys, new members all welcome.

For more information contact Jude Powell on 07790 267419 or J.Powell@hockeywales.org.uk.

The starting date is January 14, 2014.



LEFT: Ieuan Parker after achieving his Orange Belt (9th Kyu).

Pam and John are champions!



ON Tuesday, December 17, the Edmondres C pair, Pam Rosser and John Davies became this year's mixed doubles champions.

They defeated Pam Adams and Tony Fox from the Farmers Arms 3-0 in the final. The matches were played at the Hare and Hounds and all the pairs playing were very well supported.

Cardiff City Football club management team also picked the Hare and Hounds for their Christmas night out, ensuring a more lively evening than expected.

The league standings going into the Christmas break are: Llanharry (64 points), Edmondres B

(54), Edmondres C (43), Hare and Hounds (37), Edmondres A (35), Highwayman Inn (34), Cross Inn (32), Farmers Arms (31), Old Post Ladies (14), and The Star Inn (7).

The first matches of 2014 will be on Tuesday, January 7, when there is a full schedule of league matches.

Llanharry hosts the Edmondres C, the Edmondres A hosts the Star Inn, the Hare and Hounds hosts the Farmers Arms, the Old Post Ladies host the Edmondres B and the Cross Inn hosts the Highwayman Inn.

For further information e-mail Paul at cowbridgearts@gmail.com
PJT

Evan's horse is One In A Milan!

ONE IN A MILAN, trained by Llancarfan's Evan Williams ran on in the closing stages to take fourth place under Conor Ring in the £100,000 Coral Welsh Grand National at Chepstow earning his owner Paul Langford a useful £4,470 in prize money.

However, it was Evan's stable jockey Paul Moloney riding the Richard Lee trained *Mountainous* who bagged the first prize of £435,80 when getting home by a head from *Hawkes Point* and the top weighted *Tidal Bay* half-a-length away in third place.

Lee, who was full of praise for Moloney, said: "Paul gave him a fantastic ride", and Moloney said: "Richard sure knows how to get one ready for this race; fair play to him, the horse travelled great and he picked up when I wanted."

Mountainous was a 20-1 chance and each-way backers of *One In A Milan* would have been happy with his starting price of 50-1.

Bargoed's Bernard Llewellyn saw his grandson Robbie Williams land the Novices' Limited Handicap Steeplechase on his *Hansupfordetroit*. Robbie, a 51b claimer, made all the running to score by a length and a half from the favourite Seven Woods.

WINS FOR CHARLOTTE AND RACHEL

Charlotte Prichard, who hails from the Vale, and Rachel Leyshon from Bridgend both rode winners at the Harkaway Club Point-To-Point Steeplechases at Chaddesley Corbett.

Charlotte riding *Silver Token*, owned and trained by Pyle's David Brace, won the club members conditions race and Rachel partnering her father Andrew's *Fine Resolve* took the club members' event.

TUDOR'S DOUBLE

Reigning Welsh champion point-to-point rider James Tudor from Cowbridge had a double at the Cambridgeshire Harriers Hunt Club Steeplechases at Cottenham on Sunday.

James, who is assistant trainer to Llancarfan's Evan Williams, was successful on former hurdler *Sharp Suit* in a division of the open maiden and scored on ex-Flat horse *Broken Eagle* in a division of the young horse maiden.

James has now ridden 221 winners between-the-flags and only one other Welshman, the legendary Cowbridge farmer John Llewellyn who chalked-up 270 winners, has ridden more.

BRIAN LEE

CALLING ALL CLUB OFFICIALS!

We welcome your news, sports reports and other items of interest - email us at: gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk